

THE
WORKS
OF
J. J. ROUSSEAU.

Translated from the FRENCH.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOLUME the SECOND.

EDINBURGH:

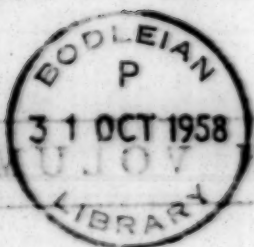
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London; and at *Edinburgh*.

M.DCC.LXXIV.

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MDCCLXXII.



J U L I A:

OR,

The NEW ELOISA.



V O L. II.

J. F. L. L.

of

The New York

1911

J U L I A ;
O R,
The N E W E L O I S A .

L E T T E R LXXX.

From JULIA.

YES, my friend, we shall continue to be united, notwithstanding our separation ; we shall be happy in spite of fortune. It is the union of minds which constitutes their true felicity ; the mutual attraction of hearts does not follow the *ratio* of their distance, and ours would be in contact were they as distant from each other as the two poles of the globe. I am sensible with you, that true lovers have a thousand expedients to soothe the pains of absence, and to fly to each others arms in a moment. Hence have they more frequent interviews even in absence than when they see each other every day ; for no sooner is either alone, than they are both together. If you, my friend, can taste that pleasure every evening, I feast on it a hundred times a-day. I am more alone, and am surrounded by objects I cannot look on without calling you to mind, without finding you ever near me.

*Qui canto dolcemente, e qui s'assise :
Qui si rivolse, e qui ritenne il passo ;*

Qui

*Qui co' begli occhi me trafise il core :
Qui disse una parola, e qui sorrise.*

Each well-knowⁿ object, left behind,
Recalls my lover to my mind :
'Twas here, I cry, he sat and sung,
While fondly on his lips I hung,
Here kindly spoke, here sweetly smil'd,
And there his looks my heart beguil'd.

But is it so with you ? can you thus alleviate the pains of absence ? can you experience the sweets of a peaceful and tender passion, that speaks to the heart without inflaming the senses ? Are your griefs at present more prudent than were formerly your desires ? The violence of your first letter still makes me tremble. I dread those deceitful transports, by so much the more dangerous, as the imagination which excites them is the less subject to controul ; and, I fear, lest even your excess of love should prove injurious to the object of it. Alas ! you perceive not—the indelicacy of your sensations hinders you from perceiving—how offensive to love is an irrational homage. You do not consider that your life is mine, nor that self-preservation leads us frequently to destruction. Sensual man ! will you never learn to love ? Call to mind those peaceful, those tender sensations you once felt, and so affectingly described. If such be the highest pleasures which even happy lovers can taste, they are the only ones wherein those who pine in absence are permitted to indulge themselves ; and those who once have felt them, tho' but for a moment, should never regret the loss of any other. I remember the reflections we
made

made in reading your Plutarch, on the sensuality and depravity of taste, which debase our nature. Were such wretched pleasures attended only with the circumstance of their not being mutual, it were enough, we said to render them insipid and contemptible. The same conclusion is applicable to the fallies of an extravagant imagination. What can the wretch enjoy whose pleasures are confined to himself alone? his pleasures are lifeless; but thine, O love! are animated and generous delights. It is the union of souls: we receive more pleasure from that which we excite, than from our own enjoyment.

But, pray tell me, my friend, in what language, or rather in what jargon, is the description you give me in your last letter? Did you not make use of it as an occasional display of your wit? If you intend to repeat it in your letters to me, it will be necessary to send me a dictionary. What is it you mean by the opinion of a garb? by a conscience that is to be put off and on like a livery? by laying down maxims by the rod? How would you have a poor simple Swiss comprehend those sublime tropes and figures? Have you not already borrowed some of the tinsel understanding of the people you describe? Take care, my good friend, how you proceed. Do you not think the metaphors of the chevalier Marini, which you have so often laughed at, bear some resemblance to your own? If a garment may be said to think in a letter, why not that fire may sweat in a sonnet *?

To

* *Sudate, O fochi, a preparar metalli.*

Ye sweating fires, that in the furnace blaze.

A line of a sonnet by Marini.

To observe in the space of three weeks all the different company that is kept in a great city; to pass judgment on their conversation; to distinguish precisely the false from the true, the real from the affected, the difference between their thoughts and words; this is the very thing for which the French are frequently censured by people of other countries; but this nation especially deserves to be studied more at leisure. I as little approve also of persons speaking ill of a country where they reside and are well received: they had better, in my judgment, submit to be deceived by appearances, than to moralize at the expence of their hosts. In short, I always suspect the candour of those observers who set up for wits: I cannot but be apprehensive least they should insensibly sacrifice the real state of things to the arts of description, and affect a brilliancy of style at the expence of truth.

You know, my friend, the saying of Muralt, that wit is the epidemical madness of the French: I am mistaken if I do not discover some marks of your being yourself infected with this phrenzy; with this difference, however, that while it is agreeable enough in the French, the Swiss are of all people in the world those whom it becomes least. There is something very quaint and far-fetched in many passages of your letter. I speak not of the lively turn, or animated expressions, which are dictated by any peculiar strength of sentiments; but of that affected prettiness of style, which, being unnatural in itself, can be natural to no people whatever, but betrays the absurd pretensions of the person who uses it. Pretensions with those we love; good God!

ought

ought not all our pretensions to be confined to the object beloved? It may be permitted to enliven an indifferent conversation with such rhetorical flourishes, and they may pass off as fine strokes of wit; but this is not the language adapted to the intercourse of lovers; the florid jargon of gallantry comes less from the heart than the most rude and simple of all dialects. I appeal to yourself: Did wit ever find an opportunity to intrude into our private parties? If those fond, those endearing conversations had a charm to dispel and keep wit at a distance, how ill-suited are its embellishments to the letters of absence, always clouded in some measure with sorrow, and in which the heart expresses itself with peculiar tenderness? But, though every passion truly great should be serious, excess of joy sooner calling forth our tears than our smiles, I would not have love be always sad; its cheerfulness should, nevertheless, be simple and unaffected, without art, without embellishment, and undissembled as the passion itself. In a word, I would have love appear in its native graces, and not in the false ornaments of wit.

My *constant companion*, in whose apartment I write this letter, pretends, that in the beginning of it I had just that pleasantry of disposition which love inspires; but I know not what is become of it. In proportion as I proceed, a certain languor invades my heart, and hardly leaves me spirits to write the reproaches she would have me make you. For you are to know the above hypercriticisms are rather her's than my own. It was she that dictated in particular the first article, laughing like an idiot, and insisting on
my

my not altering a single syllable. She says, it is to teach you to respect Marini, whom she patronises, and you have the presumption to ridicule.

But can you guess the cause of our good humour? it is her approaching marriage. The contract was signed last night, and the day is fixed for Monday sevensnight. If ever love was a gay passion, it is surely so with her: surely no girl was ever so droll upon the like occasion.

The good Mr Orbe, whose head is also a little turned, was highly delighted with the comical manner in which he was received. Less difficult to be pleased than you were, he takes great pleasure in adding to the pleasantry of courtship, and looks upon the art of diverting his mistress as a master-piece in making love. For her part, we may talk to her as we please of decorum, tell her as much as we will of the grave and serious turn she ought to assume on the point of matrimony, and of doing honour to the virgin-state she is going to quit; she laughs at all we can say, as ridiculous grimace, and tells Mr Orbe to his face, that on the wedding-day she shall be in the best humour in the world, and that one cannot go too chearfully to be married. But the little dissembler does not tell all; I surpris'd her this morning wiping her eyes, which were red with crying; and I would lay a wager, the tears of the night equal the smiles of the day. She is going to bind herself in new chains, that will relax the gentle ties of friendship; she is entering on a manner of life very different from that which she most affected. Hitherto always pleased and tranquil, she is going

ing to run those hazards which are inseparable from the best marriage; and, whatever face she may assume, I see, that, as a clear and smooth water begins to be troubled at the approach of a storm, so her chaste and timid heart feels an alarm at her approaching change of condition.

May they be happy, my dear friend! They love, and will be united in marriage: they will reap the transports of mutual enjoyment without obstacles, without fear, without remorse! Adieu, my heart is full—I can write no more.

P. S. We have seen Lord B——, but he was in such haste to proceed on his journey, that he staid with us but a moment. Impressed with a due sense of the obligations we owe him, I would have made him my acknowledgments and yours; but, I know not how, I was ashamed. It is surely a kind of insult offered to his unparalleled generosity to thank such a man for any thing!

LETTER LXXXI.

To JULIA.



WHAT children does the impetuosity of our passions make of us! how readily does an extravagant affection nourish itself on chimeras! and how easily are our too violent desires prevented by the most frivolous objects! I received your letter with as much rapture as your presence could have inspired: in the excess of my

transport, a piece of folded paper supplying in my mind the place of Julia. One of the greatest evils of absence, and the only one which reason cannot alleviate, is the inquietude we suffer concerning the actual state of the person we love. Her health, her life, her repose, her affections, nothing escapes the apprehensions of him who has every thing to lose. Nor are we more certain of the present condition than of the future; and every possible action is realized in the mind of the timid lover. I breathe, and am alive again. You are in health, and still love me; or rather ten days ago you loved me, and was well; but who can assure me it is so at this instant? How cruel, how tormenting is absence! how capricious is that situation in which we can enjoy only the past moment, for the future is not yet arrived!

Although you had said nothing about your *constant companion*, I should have detected her little malice in the censures passed on my observations, and her old grudge in the apology for Murini; but if it be permitted me in turn to apologise for myself, I will not make her wait for a reply.

In the first place then, my dear cousin, (for it is to her I should address my answer,) as to the style of my remarks, I have adopted that of the subject: I endeavoured to give you at once both an idea and an example of the mode of conversation in fashion; and thus, following an ancient precept, I wrote to you in the same manner they talk in some companies to each other. Besides, it is not the use of rhetorical figures, but the choice of them, which I blame in Marini.

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If a man has the least warmth of imagination, he must necessarily use metaphors and figurative expressions to make himself be understood. Even your own letters are full of them, without your knowing it; and I will maintain it, that none but a geometrician, or a blockhead can talk without metaphor. In effect, the same sentiment may admit of an hundred different degrees of energy; and how are we to determine the precise degree in which to enforce it, but by the turn of expression! I must confess I could not myself help smiling at the absurdity of some phrases I used. I thank you for the trouble you took to pick them out. But let them stand where they are, you will find them clear and peculiarly emphatical. Let us suppose that your two sprightly sparkling eyes, whose language is now so expressive, were separated one from the other, and from the set of features to which they give such lustre; what think you, cousin, they would say, even with all their vivacity and fire? Believe me, they would lose all power of expression; they would be mute even to Mr Orbe.

Is not the first thing that presents itself to observation in a strange country, the general cast and turn of conversation? and is not this the first observation I made in Paris? I have written to you only what is said, and not what is done in this city. If I remarked a contrast between the discourse, the sentiments, and the actions of the people, it is because the contrast is too striking to escape the most superficial observer. When I see the same persons change their maxims according to the company they frequent,

Molinists in one, and Jansenists in another, court sycophants with the minister, and factious grumblers with an anti-courtier: when I see a man in lace and embroidery rail at luxury, an officer of the revenue against imposts, or a prelate against gluttony; when I hear a court-lady talk of modesty, a noble lord of honesty, an author of candour, or an abbe of religion, and see nobody surpris'd at these absurdities; is it not natural enough to conclude, that people here are as little anxious to hear truth as to speak it? and that, so far from endeavouring to persuade others into their own opinion, they care not whether they are believed or not?

But let this suffice in the way of pleasantry, for an answer to our cousin. I will lay aside an affectation to which we are all three strangers, and I hope you will find in me for the future as little of the satirist as the wit. And now, Julia, let me reply to you; for I am at no loss to distinguish between critical raillery and serious reproaches.

I cannot conceive how both you and your cousin could so egregiously mistake the object of my description. It was not the French in particular on whom I intended to animadvert. For if the characters of nations can be determined only by their difference, how can I, who have as yet no acquaintance with any other, pretend to draw the character of this? I should not besides have been so indiscreet as to fix on the metropolis for the place of observation. I am not ignorant that capital cities differ less from each other than the national characters of the people which are there in a great measure lost and confound-

founded, as well from the influence of courts, all which bear a great resemblance to each other, as from the common consequence of living in a close and numerous society; which is also every-where nearly the same, and prevails over the original and peculiar character of the country.

Were I to study the natural characteristics of a people, I would repair to some of the more distant provinces, where the inhabitants still pursue their natural inclinations. I would proceed slowly and carefully through several of those provinces, and those at greatest distance from each other: from the difference I might observe between them, I would then trace the peculiar genius of each province; from what was theirs in common and not customary to other countries, I would trace the genius of the nation in general; and what appeared common to all nations, I should regard as characteristics of mankind in general. But I have neither formed so extensive a project; nor, if I had, am I possessed of the necessary experience to put it in execution. My design is to improve myself in the knowledge of mankind universally, and my method is to consider man in his several relations. I have hitherto been acquainted only with small societies scattered up and down, in a manner alone, and without connections. At present I am in the midst of others, which are surrounded by multitudes on the same spot, from which I shall begin to judge of the genuine effects of society; for if men are constantly made better by their association, they ought to be still the better, the more numerous and closely connected

they are, and their manners should be more simple and less corrupted at Paris than in the Valais; but if experience prove the contrary, we must draw the opposite conclusion.

This method, I confess, may in time lead to the knowledge of the national characters of people; but by a round so tedious and indirect, that I may perhaps never be qualified to determine that of any one nation upon earth. I must begin to make my observations on the first country in which I reside; proceeding, in the others I pass through, to mark the difference between them and the first: comparing France to every other, as we describe an olive-tree by a willow, or a palm-tree by a fir; and must defer the forming my judgment of the first people observed, till I have finished my observations on all the rest.

Please to distinguish then, my charming monitor, between philosophical observation and national satire. It is not the Parisians that I study, but the inhabitants of a great city; and I know not whether the remarks I have made be not as applicable to those of Rome and London, as of Paris. Moral principles do not depend on the customs of a people; so that in spite of their reigning prejudices I can perceive what is wrong in itself: but I know not whether I can justly attribute it to the Frenchman, or the *man*; whether it be the effect of habit, or of nature. Vice is in every place offensive to an impartial eye; and it is no more blameable to reprove it in whatever country it is found, because we reside there, than to correct the failings of humanity, because we live among men. Am not I

at present an inhabitant of Paris? perhaps I may have already unconsciously contributed my share to the disorders I have remarked: perhaps too long a stay may corrupt even my inclinations, and at the end of a year I may be no more than a Parisian myself; if, in order to be deserving of Julia, I do not cherish the spirit of liberty and the manners of a free-citizen. Let me proceed therefore, without restraint, in describing objects I should blush to resemble, and in animating my zeal for virtue by displaying the disgusting pictures of falsehood and vice.

Were my employment and fortune in my own power, I might without doubt make choice of other subjects for my letters. You were not displeased with those I wrote you from Meillerie and the Valais: but, my dear friend, it is necessary for me, in order to support the noise and hurry of the world in which I am obliged to live, to console myself in writing to you; and the thoughts of drawing up my narratives for your perusal, should excite me to look out for proper subjects. Discouragement would otherwise overtake me at every step, and I must entirely relinquish my observations on mankind, if you refuse to hear me. Consider that, to live in a manner so little conformable to my taste, I make an effort not unworthy of its cause: and to enable you to judge of what I must undergo to obtain you, permit me to speak sometimes of the maxims I am forced to learn, and the obstacles I am obliged to encounter.

In spite of my slow pace, and unavoidable avocations, my collection was finished when your
letter

letter happily arrived to prolong my task of copying : but I admire, in seeing it so short, how you contrive to say so much in so few words. I will maintain it, there can be no reading so delightful as that of your letters, even to those to whom you are a stranger, if their hearts do but resemble ours. But how can you be a stranger to any one who reads your letters ? is it possible that a manner so engaging, that sentiments so tender can belong to any other than Julia ? Are not your enchanting looks seen in every sentence ? is not your charming voice heard every word. It is impossible for any other to love, to think, to speak, to act, to write like Julia. Be not surprised then if your letters, which so strikingly convey your form and feature, should sometimes have the same effect as your presence on a lover, who so devoutly idolises your person. I lose my senses in their perusal ; my head grows giddy ; a devouring flame consumes me ; my blood boils, and I become frantic with passion. I fancy I see, I feel, I press you to my heart—adorable object ! bewitching beauty ! source of rapture and delight ! image of those angelic forms which are the fabled companions of the blessed ! come to my arms—she is here—I clasp her in my embrace—ah ! no, she is vanished ; and I grasp but at a shadow. Indeed, my dear friend, you are too charming ; you have been too indulgent to the weakness of a heart, that can never forget your charms, nor your tenderness. Your beauty even triumphs in its absence, it pursues me wherever I go, it makes me dread to be alone, and it is my greatest misery that I dare
not

not give myself to the contemplation of so ravishing an object.

Our friends then, I find, will be united in spite of all obstacles; or rather they are so while I am now writing. Amiable and deserving pair! may heaven bestow on them all the blessings their prudent and peaceful affections, innocence of manners, and goodness of heart, deserve! may it bless them with that happiness it is so sparing of to those who were formed by nature to taste its delights! Happy indeed will they be, if heaven should grant to them what it has taken from us! And yet, Julia, we may draw some consolation even from our misfortunes. Do you not perceive that our severest troubles are not without their peculiar satisfactions; and that although our friends may taste pleasures of which we are deprived, we enjoy others of which they are ignorant? Yes, my gentle friend, in spite of absence, losses, fears, in spite even of despair itself, the powerful exertion of two hearts, longing for each other, is always attended with a secret pleasure unknown to those at ease. This is one of the miracles of love that teacheth us how to extract pleasure from pain, and would make us look upon a state of indifference as the greatest of all misfortunes. Though we lament our own situation, then let us not envy that of others. On the whole, perhaps, there is none preferable to our own: as the Deity derives his happiness from himself, the hearts that glow with a celestial passion find in themselves the source of refined enjoyment, independent of fortune and all the universe besides.

L E T-

L E T T E R LXXXII.

To JULIA.

AT length, Julia, behold me swim with the stream. My collection being finished, I begin to frequent the public diversions, and to sup in company; I spend the whole day abroad, and am attentive to every striking object: but, perceiving nothing that resembles you, I recollect myself in the midst of noise and confusion, and converse in secret with my love. It is not however, that this busy and tumultuous life has not in it something agreeable, or that such a vast variety of objects do not present a considerable fund of gratification to the curiosity of a stranger: but, to enjoy them, the heart should be vacant, and the understanding idle. Both love and reason seem to unite in raising my disgust against such amusement. Every thing here being confined to appearances, which are every instant changing, I have time neither to be affected with nor to examine any thing.

Hence I begin to see the difficulties of studying the world; and indeed I know not what situation is most likely to make me a proficient in this science. The speculatist lives at too great a distance, and the man of business too near the object, to view it critically: the one sees too much to be able to reflect on any part, and the other too little to judge of the whole piece. Every object that strikes the philosopher he examines apart, and, not being able to discern its connections and relations with others that lie beyond

yond the field of his observation, he never sees them placed in their proper point of view, and knows neither their real causes nor effects. The man of business sees all, and has leisure to think on nothing. The instability of objects permits him barely to perceive their existence, and not to examine their qualities: they pass in succession before him with such rapidity, that they efface the impression of each other, and load his memory only with a chaos of confused ideas. It is also as impossible to make observations, and meditate on them alternately; as the scene requires a constant and unremitted attention, which reflection would interrupt. A man who would divide his time by intervals between solitude and society, always perplexed in retirement, and to seek in the world, would be able to do nothing in either. There is but one way: and that is, to divide the whole period of life into two parts; applying the one to observation, and the other to reflection. But even this is next to impossible; for reason is not a piece of furniture that can be thrown aside and put to use again at pleasure: the man who should live ten years without reflection, will never again be capable of it as long as he lives.

I find likewise it is a folly to think to study mankind in the quality of a simple spectator. He who pretends only to make observations, will be able to observe nothing: for, being useless to the men of business, and troublesome to those of pleasure, he will find no where admittance. We can have the opportunity of seeing others act, in proportion only as we act with them; in the school of the world, as well as in that of love,

love, we must begin by practising whatever we desire to learn.

What method then can I take? I that am a stranger, and can follow no employment in this country, and whom even the difference of religion excludes from aspiring to office? I am reduced to be humble, in order to instruct myself; and, as I can never be useful, must endeavour to make myself agreeable. To this end, I aim as much as possible to be polite without flattery, complaisant without meanness, and to put so good a face on what is tolerable in society that I may be admitted into it, without being under the necessity of adopting its vices. Every man that would see the world, and has nothing to do in it, ought at least to adopt its manners to a certain degree. For what pretensions can he have to be admitted into the society of people to whom he can be of no service, and to whom he has not the address to make himself agreeable? But, if he has found out this art, it is all that is required of him, particularly if he be a stranger. Such a one has no occasion to take part in their cabals, their intrigues, or their quarrels: if he behaves obligingly to every one; if he neither excludes nor prefers women of a certain character; if he keeps the secrets of the company into which he is admitted; if he turns not into ridicule at one house, what he sees in another; if he avoids making confidants, entering into broils, and, in particular, if he maintains a certain personal dignity; he may see the world without molestation, preserve the purity of his manners, his probity, and even his frankness itself, if it arises from a spirit of liberty,

ty, and not from that of party. This is what I have endeavoured to do, agreeable to the advice of some people of sense, whom I have chosen for my advisers, among the acquaintance Lord B——'s interest has procured me. In consequence of this, I begin now to be admitted into companies less numerous and more select. Hitherto I have been chiefly invited to regular dinners, where the only woman at table is the mistress of the family; where open house is kept for all the idle people about Paris, with whom they have the slightest acquaintance; and where every one pays for his dinner in wit, or flattery, as he can best afford; the conversation being in general noisy and confused, and very much resembling that of a public ordinary.

I am at present initiated into the more secret mysteries of visiting: being invited to private suppers, where the door is shut against all strolling and chance guests, and every one is upon an agreeable footing, if not with each other, at least with the provider of the entertainment. Here it is that the women are less reserved, and their real characters more easily discovered. The conversation is in these parties carried on with more decorum, and is more refined and satirical: instead of talking of the public news, plays, promotions, births, deaths, and marriages, which were the topics of the morning, they here take a review of the several anecdotes of Paris, divulge the secret articles of the scandalous chronicle, turn the good and bad alike into ridicule, and, in artfully describing the characters of others, undesignedly display their

own. It is in these companies that the little circumspection which remains has invented a peculiar kind of language, under which they affect to render their satire more obscure, while it only makes it more severe. It is here, in a word, that they carefully sharpen the poinard, under pretence of making it less hurtful; but, in fact, only to make it wound the deeper.

To judge, however, of this conversation according to our notions of things, we should be in the wrong to call it satirical; for it consists more of raillery than censure, and turns less upon the vicious than the ridiculous — Satire in general is not common in large cities, where that which is downright wicked is too simple to be worth talking about. What can they condemn where virtue is in no esteem? and what should they revile where nothing is held to be villainous? At Paris, more particularly, where every thing is seen in an agreeable light, the representation of things that ought to raise our indignation is well received, if it be but wrapt up in a song or an epigram. The fine ladies of this country do not like to be displeased, and are therefore displeased at nothing: they love to laugh, but wo be to him who happens to be the subject of their ridicule; the scars this caustic imprints are never to be effaced; they not only defame good manners and virtue, but exaggerate even vice itself. But to return to our company.

What strikes me most in these select meetings, is to see that half a dozen people, expressly chosen to entertain one another agreeably, and between whom there generally subsist very
inti-

intimate connections, cannot converse an hour together without introducing the affairs of half the people in Paris; just as if their hearts had nothing to say to each other, or that there was no person in company of merit enough to engage their attention. You know, Julia, how far otherwise it was with us, when we supped together at your cousin's, or your own apartment; how we could find means, in spite of constraint and secrecy, to turn the discourse on subjects that related to ourselves; how at every moving reflection, at every subtle allusion, a look more swift than lightning, a sigh rather imagined than perceived, conveyed the pleasing sensation from one heart to the other.

If the discourse here turn by accident on any of the company, it is commonly carried on in a jargon known only to the persons concerned, and which others need a vocabulary to understand. Thus by talking as it were in cypher, they are enabled to banter each other with insipid raillery, in which the greatest blockhead does not always shine the least. In the mean time, perhaps a third part of the company, incapable of taking the jest, are either reduced to a disagreeable silence, or to laugh at what they do not comprehend. Of this kind, Julia, is all the tenderness and affection I have observed in the intimacies of this country: those of a more private nature, with only a second person, I have not, nor ever shall have experienced.

In the midst of all this, however, if a man of any weight and consequence should enter on a grave discourse, or begin to discuss a serious question, a general attention would be immediately

diately fixed on this new object: men and women, old and young, every one would be ready to enter into its examination; and it is astonishing how much good sense and precision would, as it were, through emulation, fall out of their extravagant heads*. A point of morality could not be better determined in a society of philosophers, than in that of a fine lady at Paris: their conclusions would even be less precise and severe: for the philosopher, who thinks himself obliged to act as he speaks, will be less rigid in his principles; but, where morality is nothing more than a topic of discourse, the severity of it is of no consequence; and no one is displeased at an opportunity of checking philosophical pride, by placing virtue out of his reach.

Besides this, influenced by a knowledge of the world and of their own hearts, all agree in thinking human nature as depraved as possible: hence their philosophy is always of the gloomy cast; they are ever indulging their own vanity by depreciating the virtues of humanity; always accounting for good actions from vicious motives, and attributing to mankind in general the depravity of their own minds.

And yet, notwithstanding their adopting this
object

* Provided always that no unforeseen object of pleasantry starts up to disturb their gravity; for in that case, it is laid hold of by every one in a moment, and it is impossible to recall their serious attention. I remember that a handful of gingerbread cakes once ludicrously put an end to a dramatic representation at the fair. The actors were indeed quadrupeds; but how many trifling things are there that would prove gingerbread cakes to some sort of men! it is well known whom Fontenelle intended to describe in his history of the Tyntians.

abject doctrine, one of the favourite topics of these societies is *sentiment*; a word by which we are not to understand the sensation of a heart susceptible of love or friendship: this would be thought vulgar and disgusting. No; sentiment consists in great and general maxims, heightened by the most sublime subtilties of metaphysics. I can safely say, that I have never in my life heard so much talk of sentiment, nor ever comprehended so little what was meant by it; so inconceivable are these French refinements! Our simple hearts, my Julia, never were governed by any of these fine maxims; and I am afraid it is with sentiment in the polite world, as it is with Homer among the pedants, who discover in him a thousand imaginary beauties, for want of taste to discern his real ones. So much sentiment is here laid out in wit, and evaporated in conversation, that none is left to influence their actions. Happily, politeness supplies its place, and people act from custom nearly as they would from sensibility: at least so long as it costs them only a few compliments, and such trifling restraints as they willingly lay themselves under in order to be respected; but if any considerable sacrifice of their ease or interest is required, adieu to sentiment; politeness does not proceed so far; so far as it goes, however, you can hardly believe how nicely every article of behaviour is weighed, measured, and estimated. What is not regulated by sentiment, is subjected to custom, by which indeed every thing here is governed. These people are all professed copyists; and, though they abound in originals, nobody knows any thing of them, or presumes to be so

himself. *To do like other people*, is a maxim of the greatest weight in this country: and *this is the mode—that is not the mode*, are decisions from which there is no appeal.

This apparent regularity gives to the common, and even the most serious transactions of life, the most comical air in the world. They have settled even the very moment when it is proper to send cards to their acquaintance; when to visit with a card, that is, to visit without visiting at all; when to do it in person; when it is proper to be at home, when to be denied; what advances it is proper to make, or reject, on every occasion; what degree of sorrow should be affected at the death of such or such a one*; how long to mourn in the country; when they may come to console themselves in town; the very day, and even the minute, when the afflicted is permitted to give a ball, or go to the play. Every body in the same circumstances does the same thing: they keep time, and their motions are made all together, like the evolutions of a regiment in battalia; so that you would think them so many puppets, nailed to the same board, or moved by the same wire.

Now, as it is morally impossible that all these people, though they act in the same manner, should

* To be afflicted at the decease of any person, betrays a sense of humanity, and is a sign of a good disposition, but is no instance of virtue; there being no moral obligation to lament even the death of a father. Whoever in such a case, therefore, is not really afflicted, ought not to affect the appearance of it; for it is more necessary always to avoid deceit, than to comply with custom.

should be at once equally affected, it is plain, their peculiar characters are not to be known by their actions; it is plain their discourse is only a formal jargon, which assists us less to form a judgment of the French manners in general, than the peculiar mode of conversing in Paris. In like manner, we learn only here their terms of conversation, but nothing by which we can estimate their moral character. I say the same of most of their writings; and even of their theatrical representations; the stage, since the time of Moliere, being a place where they rather repeat agreeable dialogues, than give a representation of life and manners. There are here three theatres; on two of which they only introduce imaginary characters, such as Harlequin, Pantaloon, and Scaramouch, on the one; and, on the other, gods, devils, and conjurers. On the third, they represent those immortal dramas which give us so much pleasure in reading, and other new pieces which are from time to time written for the stage; many of which are tragical, but not affecting; and, though the sentiments contained in them are sometimes natural, and well enough adapted to the human heart, they give us not the least light into the peculiar manners of the people to whom they afford entertainment.

The institution of tragedy was originally founded on religion, whose sanction was sufficient to establish its authority. Besides this, the tragic scene always presented to the Greeks an instructive and agreeable representation, either in the misfortunes of the Persians their enemies, or in the vices and follies of the kings from which
they

they themselves were delivered. Should they represent in like manner at Berne, at Zurich, or at the Hague, the ancient tyranny of the house of Austria, the love of liberty and their country would make such a representation peculiarly interesting to the spectators: but I would be glad to know of what use are the tragedies of Corneille at Paris; and what interest its citizens can take in the fate of a Pompey or Sertorius. The Greek tragedies turned upon real events, or such as were supposed to be real, being founded on historical tradition. But what business has a refined heroic passion in the breasts of the great? The conflicts of love and virtue cause them, no doubt, many unhappy day and sleepless night! the heart is doubtless vastly concerned in the marriages of kings! Judge then of the probability and use of so many performances all turning on such imaginary subjects.

As to comedy, it should certainly be a lively representation of the manners of the people for whom it is written; that it may serve them as a mirror to shew them their vices and follies. Terence and Plautus mistook their subjects; but their predecessors, Aristophanes and Menander, displayed Athenian manners before an Athenian audience; and since these, Moliere, and Moliere only, has represented still more ingenuously in France the manners of the French in the last age.

The objects of the pictures are since changed; but they have never since had so faithful, so masterly a painter. At present, they only copy on the theatre the manner of conversing in about an hundred families in Paris; and this is their repre-

representation of French manners: so that there are in this great city five or six hundred thousand persons, whose various characters are never introduced on the stage. Moliere described the shopkeeper and artizan, as well as the marquis: Socrates introduces the discourses of coachmen, carpenters, shoemakers, and masons. But our present writers, quite of another stamp, think it beneath them to know what passes in a trader's compting-house or the shop of a mechanic: their dramas must consist of persons of the first quality; for by the grandeur of their characters, they aim at a degree of eminence they never could attain by the force of genius. Nay, the audience itself is become so very delicate, that the chief of the spectators are as jealous of place and precedence in going to a play as in making a visit, never condescending to be present at the representation of characters of inferior condition.

Indeed, the people of fashion here are considered by themselves as the only inhabitants of the earth; all the rest of mankind are nothing. All the world keep a coach, a Swiss, and a *maitre d'hotel*: all the world, therefore, consists of a very small number of people. Those who walk a-foot are nobody; they are your common people, human creatures, the vulgar, folks in short of another world: so that a coach is not so necessary to carry one about, as to give one a title to existence. And hence there is a handful of impertinent people, who look upon themselves as the only beings of any consequence in the universe; though, were it not for the mischief they occasion, they themselves would not deserve to be numbered with the rest of
man

mankind. It is nevertheless solely for these people that theatrical entertainments are made. They are represented by fictitious characters in the middle of the theatre, and shew themselves in real ones on each side; they are at once persons of the drama on the stage, and comedians in the boxes. It is thus the sphere of the world and genius is contracted, while the present dramatic writers absurdly affect to introduce only characters of imaginary importance. No man is worthy of being brought upon the stage that does not wear a laced coat. A stranger would hence be apt to think France peopled only by counts and marquises, although in fact, the more miserable and beggarly its inhabitants grow, the more splendid and brilliant is their representation on the theatre: and hence it is, that the ridiculous behaviour of persons of rank, in being exposed on the stage, rather gains ground than diminishes; and that the common people, who are ever aping the rich, go less to the theatre to laugh at their follies than to study them, and to become by imitation greater fools than the originals.

The French are indebted even to Moliere in a great measure for this evil: he corrected the courtiers by spoiling the citizens; and his ridiculous marquises were the first model of those still more contemptible *petit-maitres* which succeeded them in the city.

There is in general much discourse and but very little action on the French stage: the reason of which is, perhaps, that the French *talk* much more than they *do*, or at least that they pay a much greater regard to what is said than

to

to what is done. I remember the answer of a spectator, who, in coming out from the representation of one of the pieces of Dionysius the tyrant, was asked what he had seen? *I have seen nothing*, said he, *but I have heard a deal of talk*. The same might be said of the French plays. Racine and Corneille, with all their genius, are no more than talkers, and their successor is the first of all the French poets, who, in imitation of the English, has sometimes ventured to bring scenes of action on the stage. In common, their plays consist only of witty or florid dialogues well disposed; where it is obvious the chief design of the speakers is to display their talents of wit and elocution. In the mean time, almost every sentiment is delivered in the style of a general maxim. However transported they may be with passion, they always preserve their respect to the public, of whom they think more constantly than of themselves: the pieces of Racine and Moliere excepted *, egotism is excluded as scrupulously from the French drama, as from the writings of Messieurs de Port-Royal; and the passions of the human heart never speak, but with all the modesty of Christian humility in the third person. There is besides a certain affected dignity in theatrical discourse and action, which never permits the passions to be expressed in their natural language,
or

* Moliere ought not to be ranked here with Racine: the first indeed abounds with maxims and sentential observations, like all the others, especially in his versified pieces: but in Racine all is sentimental; he makes every character speak for the author, and is in this point truly singular among all the dramatic writers of his nation.

or suffers the writer to divest himself of the poet and attend to the scene of action, but binds him constantly down to the theatre and the audience. Hence the most critical situations, the most interesting circumstances of the piece, never make him forget the nicest arrangement of phrase or elegancies of attitude. Should even despair plunge a dagger in the heart of his hero, nor contented that, like Polixenes, he should observe a decency in falling, he would not even let him fall: for the sake of decency, he is supported bolt upright after he is dead, and continues as erect after he expired as before.

The reason of all this is, that a Frenchman requires on the stage neither nature nor deception, but only wit and sentiment: he requires only to be diverted, and cares not whether what he sees be a true or false representation of nature. Nobody here goes to the theatre for the pleasure of seeing the play, but for the sake of seeing and being seen by the company, and to catch a subject for conversation after the play is over. The actor with them is always the actor, never the character he represents. He who gives himself those important airs of an universal sovereign is not the emperor Augustus, it is only Baron. The reliet of Pompey is no other than Adrienne, Alzira is mademoiselle Gauffin, and that formidable savage is no other than the civil Grandval. The comedians, on the other hand, give themselves no trouble to keep up an illusion which nobody expects. They place the venerable heroes of antiquity between six rows of young spruce Parisians: they have their Roman dresses made up in the French fashion: the
weep-

weeping Cornelia is seen bathed in tears, with her rouge laid on two fingers thick; Cato has his hair dressed and powdered, and Brutus struts along in a Roman hoop-petticoat: yet nobody is shocked at all this absurdity, nor doth it hinder the success of the piece; for, as the actors only are seen in the characters, so what respects the author is the only thing considered in the play; and, though propriety should be entirely neglected, it is easily excused, for every one knows that Corneille was no taylor, nor Crebillon a peruke-maker.

Thus, in whatever light we view this people, all is verbosity and jargon, talk without design, and words without meaning. In the theatre, as in the world, be as attentive as you will to what is said, you will learn nothing of what is done; when a man has spoken, it would be thought impertinent to inquire after his conduct: he has spoken, that is sufficient, and he must stand or fall by what he has said. The respectable man here is not he that does good actions, but he that says good things; and a single sentence sometimes inadvertently uttered shall cast an odium on a man's character, which forty years of integrity will not be able to erase. In a word, although the conduct of men does not always resemble their discourse, yet I see they are characterised by their discourse without any regard to their actions: I have remarked also, that in a great city, society appears more free, agreeable, and even more safe, than among people less knowing and less civilised; but I will not pretend to say the latter are therefore less humane, temperate, or just. On the contrary, among

the former, where every thing is governed by appearances, the heart is perhaps more hid by external shew, and lies deeper concealed under agreeable deceptions. It does not however belong to me, who am a stranger, without business, pleasures, or connections, to decide here.

I begin, nevertheless, to perceive in myself that intoxication into which such a busy tumultuous life plunges every one who leads it; and am affected with a dizziness, like that of a man before whose eyes a multitude of successive objects pass with rapidity. Not one of these, which thus strike me, affects my heart; but all together they so disturb and suspend its affections, that I sometimes forget not only myself, but even my Julia. Every day, on leaving my apartment, I leave my *observations* locked up behind me, and proceed to make others on the frivolous objects which present themselves. Insensibly I begin to think and reason in the manner of other people; and, if ever I strive to get the better of their prejudices, and look upon things as they are, I am immediately borne down by a torrent of words, which carry with them a shew of reason. The people here will prove to a demonstration, that none but superficial half-witted reasoners regard the reality of things; that the true philosopher considers only their appearances; that prejudice and prepossession should pass for principle, decorum for law, and that the most profound wisdom consists in living like fools.

Thus constrained to pervert the order of the moral affections, to set a value on chimeras, and put nature and reason to silence, I see with regret

gret how sullied and defaced is that divine image which I cherish in my breast, once the sole object of my desires, and the only guide of my conduct: I am borne by one caprice to another, my inclinations are continually enslaved by the general opinion, and I am never certain one day what I shall approve the next.

Abashed and confounded to find my humanity so far debased; to see myself fallen so low from that innate greatness of mind to which our passion had reciprocally elevated us, I return home at night, with a heart swelling, yet vacant as a ball puffed up with air; sickened with disgust, and sunk in sorrow. But with what joy do I recollect myself, when alone! with what transports do I feel the sensations of love again take possession of my heart, and restore me to the dignity of a man! O love! how refined are thy sensations! how do I applaud myself when I see the image of virtue preserve its lustre still in my breast! when I contemplate thine, my Julia! still there, unsullied, sitting on a throne of glory, and dissipating in a moment my gloomy delusions. I feel my depressed soul revive; I seem to recover my existence, to live anew, and to regain, with my love, those sublime sentiments that render the passion worthy of its object.

L E T T E R LXXXIII.

From JULIA.

I AM just returned, my dear friend, from the
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enjoyment of one of the most delightful sights I shall ever behold. The most prudent, the most amiable girl in the world is at length become the most deserving, the best of women. The worthy man, to whom she has given her hand, lives only to revere, to cherish, to make her happy; and I feel that inexpressible pleasure of being a witness to the happiness of my friend, and of sharing it with her. Nor will you, I am convinced, partake of it less than myself; you, for whom she had always the tenderest esteem, who were dear to her almost from her infancy, and have received from her obligations which should render her yet more dear to you. Yes, we will sympathise with all her sensations; if to her they give pleasure, to us they shall afford consolation; for, so great is the value of that friendship which unites us, that the happiness of any one of the three is sufficient to moderate the afflictions of the other two.

Let us not, however, too highly felicitate ourselves; our incomparable friend is going in some measure to forsake us. She is now entered on a new scene of life, is bound by new engagements, and become subject to new obligations. Her heart, which once was only ours, will now find room for other affections, to which friendship must give place. We ought therefore, my friend, to be more scrupulous hereafter in the services we impose on her zeal; we ought not only to consult the sincerity of her attachment, and the need we have of her service, but what may with propriety be required in her present situation, what may be agreeable or displeasing to her husband. We have no business to in-

quise

quire what virtue demands in such a case, the laws of friendship are sufficient. He who for his own sake could expose his friend, deserves not to have one. When ours was unmarried, she was at liberty; she hady nobody to call her to account for her conduct, and the uprightness of her intentions was sufficient to justify her to herself. She considered us as man and wife destined for each other; and her chaste yet susceptible heart uniting a due regard for herself to the most tender compassion for her culpable friend, she concealed my fault without abetting it; but now circumstances are changed; and she is justly accountable to the man to whom she has not only plighted her vows, but resigned her liberty. She is now entrusted not only with her own honour, but with that of her husband; and it is not enough that she is virtuous, her virtue must be respected, and her conduct approved: she must not only *deserve* the esteem of her husband, but she must *obtain* it: if he blames her, she is to blame; and though she be innocent, she is in the wrong the moment she is suspected; for to study appearances is an indispensable part of her duty.

I cannot determine precisely how far I am right in my judgment; I leave that to you: but there is a monitor within that tells me it is not right my cousin should continue to be my confident, nor that she should be the first to tell me so. I may be frequently mistaken in my arguments, but I am convinced I am always right in the sensations on which they are founded; and this makes me confide more in those sensations than on the deductions of my reason.

From this consideration I have already formed a pretence to get back your letters, which, for fear of a surprise, I had put into her hands. She returned them with an oppression of heart which mine easily perceived, and which convinced me I had acted as I ought. We entered into an explanation, but our looks were sufficiently expressive; she embraced me, and burst into tears: the tender sensibility of friendship hath little occasion for the assistance of language.

With respect to the future address of your letters, I thought immediately of my little Anet, as the safest. But if this young woman be inferior in rank to my cousin, is that a reason we should less regard her virtue? Have I not reason, on the contrary, to fear my example may be more dangerous to one of less elevated sentiments; that what was only an effort of the sublimest friendship in one, may be the first step to corruption in the other; and that in abusing her gratitude, I may make virtue itself subservient to the promotion of vice? Is it not enough, alas! for me to be culpable, without seducing accomplices, and aggravating my own crime by involving others in my guilt? Of this, therefore, no more: I have hit on another expedient, less safe indeed, but less exceptionable, as it lays nobody open to censure, nor requires a confident. It is for you to write to me under a fictitious name; as for example, that of Mr Bosquet, and to send your letters under cover addressed to Regianino, whom I shall take care to instruct. Thus Regianino himself will know nothing of our correspondence, or at most can only form suspicions which he dares not confirm; for
Lord

Lord B——, on whose favour he depends, has answered for his fidelity. While our correspondence is maintained by this means, I will try if it be possible to resume the method we made use of in your voyage to the Valois, or some other that may be lasting and without hazard.

There is something in the turn and style of your letters, that would convince me, were I even unacquainted with the state of your heart, that the life you lead at Paris is in no wise agreeable to your inclinations. The letters of Muralt, of which they so loudly complain in France, are even less satyrical and severe than yours. Like a child that is angry with its tutors, you revenge the disagreeable necessity you are under of studying the world, upon your first teachers.

What surprises me most, however, is, that the very circumstance, which usually prejudices foreigners in favour of the French, should give you disgust; I mean their polite reception of strangers, and their general turn of conversation; though by your own confession, you have met with great civility. I have not forgot your distinction between Paris in particular, and great cities in general; but I see plainly, that, without knowing precisely what belongs to either, you censure without considering whether it be truth or slander. But however this be, the French are my favourites, and you do not at all oblige me in reviling them. It is to the many excellent writings France has produced, that I am indebted for most of those lessons by which we have together profited. If Switzerland is emerged from its ancient barbarity, to whom is
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it obliged? the two greatest and most virtuous men in modern story, Catinat and Fenelon, were both Frenchmen. Henry the fourth, the good king, whose character I admire, was a Frenchman. If France be not the country of liberty, it is properly that of *men*; a superior advantage in the eyes of a philosopher to that of licentious freedom. Hospitable, protectors of the stranger, the French overlook real insult, and a man would be pelted in London for saying half so much against the English, as the French will bear at Paris. My father, who hath spent the greatest part of his life in France, never speaks but with rapture of this agreeable people.

If he has spilt his blood in the service of its king, he has not been forgotten in his retirement, but is still honoured by royal beneficence. Hence, I think myself in some degree interested in the glory of a nation, to which that of my father is indebted. If the people of all countries, my friend, have their good and ill qualities, you ought surely to pay the same regard to that impartiality which praises, as to that which blames them.

To be more particular with you, I will ask you why you throw away in idle visits the time you are to spend at Paris? Is not Paris a theatre wherein great talents may be displayed as well as London? and do strangers find more difficulties in the way to reputation in the former, than they do in the latter? Believe me, all the English are not like Lord B——, nor do all the French resemble those fine talkers that give you so much disgust. Try, put them to the proof,
though

though it be only to acquire a more intimate acquaintance with their manners; and judge of people, that you own speak so well, by their deeds. My cousin's father says, you know the constitution of the empire, and the interests of princes. My Lord B——— acknowledges also, that you are well versed in the principles of politics, and the various systems of government: and I have got it into my head, that of all countries in the world you will succeed best in that where merit is most esteemed, and that you want only to be known, to be honourably employed. As to your religion's being an obstacle, why should yours be more so than another's? is not good sense a security against fanaticism and persecution? Is bigotry more prevalent in France than in Germany? and is there any thing that should hinder your succeeding at Paris, as Mr St Saphorin has done at Vienna? If you consider the end, the more speedy your attempts, the sooner may you promise yourself success. If you balance the means, it is certainly more reputable for a man to advance himself by his own abilities, than to be obliged for preferment to his friends. But, if you purpose a longer voyage——ah! that *sea*!—I should like England better if it lay on this side Paris.——

But now I talk of Paris, may I venture to take notice of another piece of affectation I have remarked in your letters? How comes it that you, who spoke to me so freely of the women of this country, say nothing about the Parisian ladies? Can those celebrated and polite females be less worth your description, than the simple and unpolished inhabitants of the mountains? or are
you

you apprehensive of giving me uneasiness by a picture of the most charming and seductive creatures in the universe? If this be the case, my friend, undeceive yourself; and rest assured, that the worst thing you can do for my repose is to say nothing about them; and that however you might praise them, your silence in that respect is more suspicious than would be your highest encomiums.

I shall be glad also to have some little account of the opera at Paris, of which they relate such wonders; for after all, the music may be bad, and yet the representation have its beauties; but if not, it will at least afford a subject for your criticism, which will offend nobody.

I know not whether it be worth while to tell you, that my cousin's wedding produced me two suitors: they met here a few days ago; one of them from Yverdun, hunting all the way from castle to castle; and the other from Germany, in the stage coach from Berne. The first is a kind of smart, that speaks loud and peremptory enough to make his repartees pass for wit among those who attend only to his manner. The other is a great bashful simpleton, whose timidity, however, is not of that amiable kind which arises from the fear of displeasing; but is owing to the embarrassment of a blockhead who knows not what to say, and the awkwardness of a libertine who is at a loss how to behave himself in the company of modest women. As I well know the intentions of my father in regard to these two gentlemen, I took, with pleasure, the freedom he gave me, of treating them agreeable to my own humour, which, I believe, is such

as will soon get the better of that which brought them hither. I hate them for their presumption, in pretending to a heart which is yours, without the least merit to dispute it with you ; yet if they had ever so much, I should hate them the more ; but where could they acquire it ? they or any other man in the universe ? no, my dear friend, rest satisfied, it is impossible. Nay, were it possible that another should be possessed of equal merit, or even that another *you* should attack my heart, I should never listen to any but the first. Be not uneasy, therefore, at these two animals, which I have with regret condescended to mention. What pleasure should I have in being able to give them both such equal portions of disgust, as that they should resolve to depart both together as they came !

M. de Croufaz has lately given us a refutation of the ethic epistles of Mr Pope, which I have read, but it did not please me. I will not take upon me to say which of these two authors is in the right, but I am persuaded that the book of the former will never excite the reader to do any one virtuous action, while our zeal for every thing great and good is awakened by that of Pope. For my own part, I have no other rule by which to judge of what I read, than that of consulting the dispositions in which I rise up from my book ; nor can I well conceive what sort of merit any piece has to boast, the reading of which leaves no benevolent impression behind it, nor stimulates the reader to any thing that is virtuous and good *.

Adieu,

* If the reader approves of this criterion, and makes use
of

Adieu, my dear friend; I would not finish my letter so soon, but am called away. I leave you with regret; for I am at present in a cheerful disposition, and I love you should partake of my happiness. The cause which now inspires it is, that my dear mother is much better within these few days; she has indeed found herself so well as to be present at the wedding, and to give away her niece, or rather her other daughter. Poor Clara wept for joy to see her; and I——but you may judge of my sensations, who, deserving her so little, hourly tremble at the thoughts of losing her. In fact, she did the honours of the table, and acquitted herself on the occasion with as good a grace as if she had been in perfect health. Nay, it seemed to me that some remains of languor in her disposition rendered her elegant complacences still more affecting. Never did this incomparable parent appear so good, so charming, so worthy to be revered!—Do you know that she asked Mr Orbe concerning you several times? Although she never speaks of you to me, I am not ignorant of her esteem for you; and that if ever she were consulted, your happiness and mine would be her first concern. Ah! my friend, if your heart can be truly grateful, you owe her many, many obligations!

of it to judge of this work, I will not appeal from his judgment, whatever it prove.

L E T.

LETTER LXXXIV.

To JULIA.

WELL, my Julia, scold me, quarrel with me, beat me; I will endure every thing, but will not cease to acquaint you with my thoughts. Who should be the depositary of my sentiments but you who have enlightened them? and with whom should my heart converse, if you refuse to hear me? When I give you an account of the observations I have made, and of my own opinions, it is not so much for your approbation, as correction; and the more liable I am to fall into error, the more punctual I should be in my application to your judgment. If I censure the manners of the people in this great city, I do not seek to be justified for taking this liberty, because I write to you in confidence; for I never say any thing of a third person, which I would not aver to his face; and all I write to you concerning the Parisians, is no more than a repetition of what I daily advance in conversation with themselves. They are not in the least displeased with my freedom; they even join with me in many particulars. They complain of our *Muralt*: I am persuaded, they see, and are convinced, how much he hated them, even in his panegyrics; but I am much mistaken, if in my criticism they do not perceive the contrary. The esteem and gratitude their generosity inspires, serve to increase my freedom; it may be serviceable to some of them; and, if I

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may judge from their manner of receiving truth from my lips, they do not think me below their regard. When this is the case, my Julia, true censure is more laudable than even true praise; for that only serves to corrupt the heart of those on whom it is bestowed, and there are none so eager to obtain it as the most worthless; on the contrary, censure may be useful, and can only be endured by the most deserving. I sincerely own, I honour the French as the only people in the world who really love their fellow-creatures, and who are naturally benevolent; but, for this very reason, I am less inclined to grant them that general admiration they seem to expect, even for the faults they acknowledge. If the French had no virtues, I should not mention them; if they had no vices they would not be men; they have too many excellent qualities for indiscriminate praise.

As to the attempts you mention, they are impracticable, because I should be obliged to use means which are not only inconvenient, but which you have also interdicted. Republican austerity is not in vogue here; they need more flexible virtues, which are more easily adapted to the interest of their friends or patrons. They respect merit, I confess: but the talents that acquire reputation are very different from those which lead to fortune; and, if I am so unfortunate as to possess the latter only, will Julia consent to become the wife of an adventurer? In England it is quite the contrary; and though their manners are perhaps less refined than in France, yet they rise to fortune by more honourable steps; because the people having more
share

share in the government, public esteem is of more consequence. You are not ignorant of what Lord B—— proposed to do for me, and of my intention to justify his zeal. I can have no objection to any spot on the globe except its distance from you, O Julia! if it is difficult to procure your hand, it is still more difficult to deserve so great a blessing; and yet, methinks it is a noble task.

The account you give of your mother's health relieved me from the greatest anxiety. I perceived your distress, even before my departure, and therefore I durst not express my fears; but I thought her so changed, that I was apprehensive she would fall into some dangerous illness. Be careful of her, because she is dear to me, because my heart reveres her, because all my hopes are centered in her goodness, and because she is the mother of my Julia.

As for the two suitors, I own, I do not like to hear of them, even in jest; but the manner in which you mention them expels my fears, and I will no longer hate these unfortunate pretenders, since you imagine they are hated by you: yet I admire your simplicity in believing yourself capable of hatred. Do not you perceive that what you take for hatred, is nothing more than the impatience of insulted love? thus anxious mourns the amorous turtle when its beloved mate is in danger of being caught. No, Julia; no, incomparable maid! when you are capable of hatred, I may cease to love you.

P. S. Beset by two importunate rivals ! how I pity you ! for your own sake, hasten their dissolution.

L E T T E R LXXXV.

From JULIA.

I HAVE delivered into Mr Orbe's hands a packet which he has engaged to forward to M. Silvester, from whom you will receive it; but I caution you, my dear friend, not to open it till you retire into your own chamber, and are quite alone. You will find in this packet a small trinket for your particular use.

It is a kind of amulet which lovers gladly wear. The manner of using it is very whimsical. It must be contemplated for a quarter of an hour every morning, or until it softens the spectator into a certain degree of tenderness. It is then applied to the eyes, the mouth, and next to the heart; and it is generally esteemed the best preservative against the noxious air of a country infected with gallantry. They even attribute an electrical quality to these talismans, which is very singular, but which acts only upon faithful lovers. They say it communicates the impression of kisses from one to the other, though at the distance of a hundred leagues. I do not pretend to warrant the success of this charm from experience; only, this I know, it is your own fault if you do not put it to the proof.

Calm your fears with regard to my two gallants,

lants, or pretenders, call them which you please. They are gone: peace be with them! since they are out of my sight, I shall no longer hate them.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TO JULIA.

AND so, my Julia, you insist on a description of these Parisian ladies? vain girl! but it is a homage due to your charms. Notwithstanding all your affected jealousy, your modesty, and your love, I have discovered more vanity than fear disguised under this curiosity. Be it as it will, I shall be just; I may safely speak the truth; but I should undertake the task with better spirits if I had more to praise. Why are they not a hundred times more lovely! Would they had sufficient charms to reflect, by the comparison, new excellence upon yours.

You complain of my silence: good heaven! what could I have written? In reading this letter, you will perceive why I love to speak of your neighbours the Valaisian ladies, and why I have hitherto neglected to mention those of this country: the first continually remind me of you, my Julia; but the others—read, and you will know. Few people think as I do of the French ladies, if, indeed, I am not quite singular in my opinion. Equity obliges me therefore to give you this hint, that you may suppose I delineate them, perhaps, not as they are in reality, but as they appear to me. Nevertheless, if I do them injustice in my description, I know you will

not fail to censure me; and then will your injustice be greater than mine, because the fault is entirely your own.

Let us begin with their exterior qualities: the greatest number of observers proceed no farther. If I should follow their example, the women in this country would have great cause to be dissatisfied: they have an *exterior* character as well as an *exterior* face; and, as neither one or the other is much to their advantage, it would be unjust to form an opinion of them from either. Their figure, for the most part, is only passable, and in general rather indifferent than perfect; yet there are exceptions. They are slender rather than well-made, and therefore they gladly embrace the fashions which disguise them most; but I find, that in other countries the women are foolish enough to imitate these fashions, tho' contrived merely to hide defects which they have not.

Their air is easy and natural, their manner free and unaffected, because they hate all restraint; but they have a certain * *disinvoltura*, which, tho' it is not entirely destitute of grace, they frequently carry even to a degree of absurdity. Their complexion is moderately fair, and they are commonly pale, which does not in the least add to their beauty. With regard to their necks, they are in the opposite extreme to the Valefians. This defect they endeavour to supply by art; nor are they less scrupulous of borrowing an artificial whiteness. Though I have never

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* Freedom, ease.

ver seen these objects but at a distance, they expose so much of themselves, that little remains behind for conjecture. These ladies seem in this not to understand their own interest: for if the face is but moderately handsome, the imagination heightens every concealed charm; and, according to the Gascon philosopher, there is no appetite so strong as that which was never satisfied, especially in this sense.

Their features are not very regular, but they have something in their countenance which supplies the place of beauty, and which is sometimes much more agreeable. Their eyes, tho' quick and sparkling, are neither penetrating nor sweet: they strive to animate them by the help of *rouge*, but the expression they acquire by this means has more of anger in it than love; nature has given them sprightliness only; and tho' they sometimes seem to solicit tenderness, they never promise a return *.

They have acquired so great a reputation for their judgment in dress, that they are patterns to all Europe. Indeed, it is impossible to adapt such absurd fashions with more taste. They are, of all women, the least under subjection to their own modes. Fashion governs in the provinces, but the Parisians govern fashion, and every one of them is skilled in suiting it to her own advantage: the first are ignorant and servile plagiarists, who copy even orthographical errors; the latter are like authors, who imitate with judg-

* Speak for yourself, my dear philosopher, others may have been more happy. A coquet only promises to every body what she should reserve but for one.

judgment, and have knowledge to correct the mistakes of their original.

Their apparel is more uncommon than magnificent; rather elegant than rich. That rapid succession of their fashions which renders them old and obsolete even from one year to another, and that neatness which induces them to change their dress so frequently, preserve them from much ridiculous magnificence; they do not however spend less money on that account, but their expences are better conducted. Instead of superb-trimmings and embroidery, in which the Italians pride themselves, their cloaths are always plain and new. Both sexes observe in this particular the same moderation and delicacy, with which I am extremely pleased: for I like to see a coat neither laced nor soiled. There is no nation in the world, except our own, where the women especially wear less gold and silver. The same kind of stuffs are wore by people of all ranks, so that it would be difficult to distinguish a dutchess from a citizen, if the first had not some marks of distinction which the other dares not imitate. But this seems to have its inconveniences: for whatever is the fashion at court, is immediately followed in the city; and you never see in Paris, as in other countries, a beau or belle of the last age. Nevertheless, it is not here as in most other places, where the people of the highest rank being also the richest, the women of fashion distinguish themselves by a degree of luxury which cannot be equalled. Had the ladies of the court of France attempted this kind of distinction, they would very soon

soon have been eclipsed by the wives of the citizens.

What then do you think was their resource? They took a much more effectual method, and which required more abilities: they knew that the minds of the people were deeply impressed with a sense of bashfulness and modesty. This suggested to them fashions not to be easily imitated. They perceived that the people could not endure the thoughts of *rouge*, and that they obstinately persisted in calling it by the vulgar name of paint; and therefore they daubed their cheeks, not with paint, but with *rouge*; for change but the name, and the thing is no longer the same. They also perceived that a bare neck was scandalous in the eyes of the public, and for that reason they chose to enlarge the scene. They saw—many things, which my Julia, young as she is, will surely never see. In their manners they are governed exactly by the same principle which directs their dress. That charming diffidence which distinguishes, honours, and adorns the sex, appears to them as vile and ignoble; they animate their actions and discourse with such a noble assurance, that I am confident they would look any modest man out of countenance. Thus they cease to be women, to avoid being confounded with the vulgar; they prefer their rank to their sex, and imitate women of pleasure that they themselves may be above imitation.

I know not how far they may have carried *their* imitation, but I am certain they have not succeeded in their design of preventing it in others. As to *rouge*, and the fashion of displaying

ing those charms which they ought to conceal, they have made all the progress possible. The ladies of the city had much rather renounce their natural complexion, and the charms they might borrow from the * *amorofo pensier* of their lovers, than preserve the appearance of what they are : and if this example has not prevailed among the lower sort of people, it is only because they dread the insults of the populace ; and thus are an infinite number of women kept within the bounds of decency, by the fear of offending the delicacy of the mob. Their masculine air, and grenadier-like deportment, is less striking, because so universal ; it is conspicuous only to strangers. From one end of this metropolis to the other there is scarce a woman whose appearance is not sufficiently bold to disconcert any man who has never been accustomed to the like in his own country ; from this astonishment proceeds that awkward confusion which they attribute to all strangers, and which becomes worse the moment they open their lips. They have not the sweet voice of their country-women ; their accent is hoarse, sharp, interrogative, imperious, jibing, and louder than that of a man. If in the tone of their voice they retain any thing feminine, it is entirely lost in the boldness and impertinence of their manner. They seem to enjoy the embarrassment into which every foreigner is at first thrown ; but it would probably give them less pleasure, if they were acquainted with its true cause.

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* Amorous imagination.

Whether it be, that I, in particular, am prejudiced in favour of beauty, or whether the power of beauty may not universally influence the judgment, I know not; but the handsomest women appear to me rather the most decent in their dress, and in general behave with the greatest modesty. They lose nothing by this reserve; conscious of their advantages, they know they have no need of borrowed allurements to attract our admiration. It may be also, that impudence is more intolerably disgusting when joined with ugliness; for certainly I should much sooner be tempted to affront an impertinent ugly woman, than to embrace her; whereas by modesty she might excite even a tender compassion, which is often a harbinger of love. But though it is generally remarked, that the prettiest women are the best behaved, yet there is often so much affectation in their demeanor, and they are always so evidently taken up with themselves, that one is seldom exposed in this country to that temptation which M. de Muralt sometimes experienced amongst the English ladies, of telling a woman she was handsome, only for the pleasure of persuading her to think so.

Neither the natural gaiety of the French, nor their love of singularity, is the only cause of this freedom of conversation and behaviour so remarkable in these ladies; but it is rather to be deduced from their manners, which authorise them to be continually in the company of men; from whence each sex contracts the air, the language, and the behaviour of the other.

Our Swiss ladies, on the contrary, delight in
little

little female assemblies, in which they are extremely social and happy*; for, though they probably may not dislike the company of men, yet it is certain their presence throws a sort of constraint upon them.

In Paris it is quite the reverse; the women are never easy nor satisfied without the men. In most companies, the lady of the house is seen alone amidst a circle of gentlemen; and one cannot help wondering how such an unequal proportion of men can be every-where assembled. But Paris is full of *avanturiers*, priests and abbés, who spend their whole lives in running from house to house. Thus the women learn to think, act, and speak from the men, whilst these, in return, contract a certain degree of effeminacy; and this seems the only consequence of their trifling gallantry: however, they enjoy a fulsome adoration, in which their devotees do not think it worth while to preserve even the appearance of sincerity. No matter: in the midst of her circle every woman is the sole object of attention, and that is sufficient. But if a second female enters, familiarity instantly gives place to ceremony, the high airs of quality are assumed, the attention of the men becomes divided, and each continues to be a secret constraint upon the other till the company breaks up.

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* Things are changed since that time. By many circumstances one would suppose these letters to have been written above twenty years ago; but by their style, and the manners they describe, one would conclude them to be of the last century.

The Parisian ladies are fond of public diversions : that is, they are fond of shewing themselves in public; but the great difficulty, every time they go, is to find a female companion; for decorum will not allow one lady alone to appear in the boxes, even though attended by her husband, or by any other man. It is amazing, in this very social country, how difficult it is to form these parties; out of ten that are proposed, nine generally miscarry: they are projected by the desire of being seen, and are broken by the disagreeable necessity for a petticoat-companion. I should imagine the ladies might easily abolish this ridiculous custom. What reason can there be why a woman should not be seen alone in public? Perhaps, there being no reason for it, is the very cause of its continuence. However, upon the whole, it may be prudent to preserve decency where the abolition would be attended with no great satisfaction. What great matter would there be in the privilege of appearing alone at the opera? is it not much better to reserve this exclusive privilege for the private reception of one's friends in one's own house?

It is most certain that numberless secret connections must be produced by this custom of being alone amidst such a number of men. Indeed the world is pretty well convinced of it, since experience has proved the absurdity of that maxim, That temptations are destroyed by being multiplied: so that they do not defend this fashion for its decency, but because it is most agreeable; which by-the-bye, I do not believe. For how can any love exist where modesty is held in derision? And what pleasure can there

be in a life which is at once deprived both of love and decency? But as the greatest evil which these slaves to dissipation have to fear, is the want of entertainment, the ladies are solicitous for amusement rather than love; gallantry and attendance is all they require; and provided their dangles are assiduous, they are very indifferent about the violence or sincerity of their passion. The words *love* and *lover* are entirely banished even from the most private intercourse of the sexes, and are sunk into oblivion with the *darts* and *flames* of ancient romance.

It would seem as if the whole order of natural sensations were here reversed. A girl is to have no feelings, passions, or attachments; that privilege is reserved for the married women, and excludes no paramour except their husbands. The mother had better have twenty lovers, than her daughter one. Adultery is considered as no crime, and conveys no indecency in the idea: their romances, which are universally read for instruction, are full of it; and there appears nothing shocking in its consequences, provided the lovers do not render themselves contemptible by their fidelity. O Julia! there are many women in this city who have defiled their marriage-bed a hundred times, yet would presume, with the voice of impunity, to slander an union like ours, that is yet un sullied with infidelity.

One would be apt to imagine, that in Paris marriage is a different institution from what it is in other parts of the world: they call it a sacrament, and yet it has not half the power of a common contract. It appears to be nothing more than a private agreement between two per-

persons to live together, to bear the same name, and acknowledge the same children; but who, in other respects, have no authority one over the other. If a husband here should pretend to be offended with the ill conduct of his wife, he would be as generally despised, as if, in our country, he was to take no notice of her scandalous behaviour. Nor are the ladies on their parts less indulgent to their husbands; for I have not yet heard of an instance of their being punished for having imitated the infidelity of their wives. In short, what better effect can be expected from an union in which their hearts were never consulted? those who only marry fortune or title seem to be under no personal obligation.

Even love itself has lost its privilege, and is no less degenerated than marriage. As man and wife may be looked upon as a bachelor and a maid, who live together for the sake of enjoying more liberty; so are lovers a kind of people, who, with great indifference, meet for amusement, through custom, or out of vanity. The heart has nothing to do in these attachments; nothing more than certain external conveniences are ever consulted: it is, in short, to know each other, to dine together, now and then to exchange a few words, or, if possible, even less than this. An affair of gallantry lasts but a little longer than a visit, and consists chiefly in a few genteel conversations, and three or four pretty letters, filled with descriptions, maxims, philosophy, and wit. As to experimental philosophy, it does not require so much mystery; they have wisely discovered the folly of letting slip any opportunity of gratification: whether it

happens to be the lover or any other man, a man is a man, and why should a lady be more scrupulous of being guilty of an infidelity to her lover than to her husband? After a certain age they may all be considered as the same kind of puppets, made up by the same fashion-monger, and consequently the first that comes to hand is always the best.

As I know nothing of all this from experience, I can relate only what I have heard; and indeed, the representation is so very extraordinary, that I have been able to form but an imperfect idea of the matter. That which I chiefly comprehend is, that the lady's gallant is generally regarded as one of the family; that if she happens to be dissatisfied with him, he is dismissed, or if he meets with a service more to his inclination or advantage, he takes his leave, and she engages a fresh one. There are, I am told, some ladies so capricious as even to take up with their own husbands for a while, considering them at least as a kind of male creature. This whim, however, seldom lasts long: and when it is past, the good man is entirely discarded, and she takes another; or, if he should happen to be obstinate, why then she takes another and keeps them both.

But I could not help asking the person who gave me this strange account, how it was possible, after this, to live among these discarded lovers? Live among them, says he, why, they are entire strangers to her ever after; and if they should, by chance, take it into their heads to renew their amours, they would have to begin anew, and would hardly be able to recollect

lest that they had ever been acquainted. I understand you, said I; but I have some difficulty in reconciling these extravagancies. I cannot conceive, how it is possible, after such a tender union, to see each other with indifference; how the heart can avoid palpitation, even at the name of a person once beloved; why they do not tremble when they meet. You make me laugh, says he, with your tremblings; and so you would have our ladies continually fainting away.

Suppress a part of this caricature representation; place my Julia in opposition to the rest, and remember the sincerity of my heart: I have nothing more to add.

It must be confessed, however, that many of these disagreeable impressions are effaced by custom. Though the dark side of their character may first catch our attention, it is no reason why we should be blind to their amiable qualities. The charms of their understanding and good humour are no small addition to their personal accomplishments. Our first repugnance overcome, frequently generates a contrary sentiment. It is not just to take the picture only in its worst point of view.

The first inconveniency of great cities is, that mankind are generally disguised, and that in society they appear different from what they really are. This is particularly true in Paris with regard to the ladies, who derive from the observation of others the only existence about which they are solicitous. When you meet a lady in public, instead of seeing a Parisian, as you imagine, you behold only a phantom of the fashion: her stature, dimension, gait, shape, neck, colour,

lour, air, look, language, manners, every thing in short is assumed; so that, if you were to see her in her natural state, you would not know her to be the same creature. But this universal mask is by no means to her advantage; for nature's substitutes are ever inferior to herself. Besides, it is almost impossible to conceal her entirely; in spite of us, she will now and then discover herself, and in seizing her with dexterity consists the true art of observation. This is indeed no difficult matter, in conversing with the women of this country; for, if you take them off their grand theatre of representation, and consider them attentively, you will see them as they really are, and it is then possible that your aversion may be changed into esteem and friendship.

I had an opportunity of verifying this remark last week, on a party of pleasure, to which, along with some other strangers, I was, abruptly enough, invited by a company of ladies, probably with a design to laugh at us without constraint or interruption. The first day the project succeeded to their wish: they immediately began to dart their wit and pleasantry in showers; but as their arrows were not retorted, their quivers were soon empty. They then behaved with great decency, and finding themselves unable to bring us to *their* style, they were obliged to conform to ours. I know not whether they were pleased with the change; but am sure it was very agreeable to me; for I soon found that I stood a better chance to profit by the conversation of these females, than from the generality of men. Their wit now so greatly adorned their natural good sense, that changing my opinion

of the sex, I could not help lamenting, that so many amiable women should want reason, only because it is their humour to reject it. I perceived also that their natural graces began insensibly to efface the artificial airs of the city: for, without design, our manner is generally influenced by the nature of our discourse; and it is impossible to introduce much coquettish grimace in a rational conversation. They appeared much more handsome after they grew indifferent about it; and I perceived, that in order to please, they need only not disguise themselves. Hence, I am apt to conclude, that Paris, the pretended seat of taste, is of all places in the world that in which there is the least, since all their methods of pleasing are destructive of real beauty.

We continued thus together four or five days, satisfied with each other, and with ourselves. Instead of satirising Paris and its follies, we forgot both. Our whole care was to promote the happiness of our little society. We wanted no ill-natured wit of sarcasm to excite our mirth; but our laughter, like your cousin's, was the effect of good humour.

I had yet another reason to be confirmed in my good opinion of these females. Frequently, in the very midst of our enjoyment, a person would come in abruptly and whisper the lady of the house. She left the room, shut herself up in her closet, and continued writing a considerable time. It was natural to suppose, that her heart was engaged in this correspondence; and of this one of the company gave a hint, which, however, was rather ill received; a proof at least, that though she might possibly have no lovers,

vers, she was not without friends. But judge of my surprise, when I was informed that these supposed Parisian suitors were no other than the unhappy peasants of the parish, who came in their distress to implore the protection of their lady; one being unjustly taxed; another enrolled in the militia, regardless of his age and family; a third groaning under a law-suit with a powerful neighbour; a fourth ruined by a storm of hail, was going to be dragged to prison. In short, each had some petition to make, each was patiently heard; and the time we supposed to be spent in an amorous correspondence, was employed in writing letters in favour of these unhappy sufferers. It is impossible to conceive how I was astonished to find with what delight, and with how little ostentation, this young, this gay woman, performed these charitable offices. Were she even an Julia, thought I, she could not act otherwise! From that moment I continued to regard her with respect, and all her faults vanished from my eyes.

No sooner had my inquiries taken this turn, than I began to discover a thousand advantageous particulars in the very women who before appeared so unsupportable. Indeed all strangers are agreed, that, provided you exclude the fashionable topic, there is no country in the world whose women have more knowledge, talk more sensibly, with more judgment, and are more capable of giving advice. If from the Spanish, Italian, or German ladies we should take the jargon of gallantry and wit, what would there remain of their conversation? and you, my Julia, are not ignorant how it is in general with our country-

country-women. But if, with a French woman, a man has resolution to give up his pretensions to gallantry, and to draw her out of that favourite fortress, she will then make a virtue of necessity, and, arming herself with reason, will fight manfully in the open field. With regard to their goodness of heart, I will not instance their zeal to serve their friends; for, as with the rest of mankind, that may partly proceed from self-love. But though generally they love nobody but themselves, long habit will frequently produce in them the effects of a sincere friendship. Those who have constancy enough to support an attachment of ten years, commonly continue it to the end of their lives, and they will then love their old friends with more tenderness, at least with more fidelity than their new lovers.

One common accusation against the women of this country is, that they do every thing, and consequently more evil than good; but it may be observed in their justification, that in doing evil they are stimulated by the men, and in doing good are actuated by their own principles. This does not in the least contradict what I said before, that the heart has no concern in the commerce between the two sexes; for the gallantry of the French has given to the women an universal power, which stands in no need of tenderness to support it. Every thing depends upon the ladies; all things are done either by them or for them: Olympus and Parnassus, glory and fortune, are equally under their dominion. Books have no value, nor authors any esteem, but what the ladies are pleased to allow them. Their decrees are absolute as well in matters of the nicest

cest judgment as in those of the most trivial taste. Poetry, criticism, history, philosophy, politics, are all calculated for the ladies; and even the Bible itself has lately been metamorphosed into a polite romance. In public affairs their influence arises from their natural ascendancy over their husbands; not because they are their husbands, but because they are men, and it would be monstrous for a man to refuse any thing to a lady, even though she were his wife.

This authority, however, implies neither attachment nor esteem, but merely politeness and compliance with custom; for it is as essential to French gallantry to despise the women as to oblige them; and this contempt is taken as a proof, that a man has seen enough of the world to know the sex. Whoever treats them with respect is deemed a novice, a knight-errant, one who has known women only in romances. They judge so equitably of themselves, that to honour them is to forfeit their esteem; so that the principle requisite in a man of gallantry is superlative impertinence.

Let the ladies of this country pretend what they will, they are, in spite of themselves, extremely good-natured. All men who are burdened with a multiplicity of affairs, are difficult of access, and without commiseration; and in Paris, the centre of business of one of the most considerable nations in Europe, the men of consequence are particularly obdurate: those, therefore, who have any thing to ask, naturally apply to the ladies, whose ears are never shut against the unhappy: they console and serve them. In the midst of all their frivolous dissipation,

pation, they do not scruple to steal a few moments from their pleasures, and devote them to acts of benevolence; and though there may be some women mean enough to make an infamous traffic of their services, there are hundreds, on the contrary, who are daily employed in charitably assisting the distressed. However, it must be confessed, that they are sometimes so indiscreet, as to ruin an unfortunate man they happen not to know, in order to serve their own friend. But how is it possible to know every body in so extensive a country? or how can more be expected from good nature destitute of real virtue, whose sublimest effort is not so much to do good, as to avoid evil? After all, it must be allowed that their inclinations are not naturally bad; that they do a great deal of good; that they do it from their hearts; that they alone preserve the remains of humanity which is still to be found in Paris; and that without them we should see the men avaricious and insatiable, like wolves devouring each other.

I should not have known any thing of all this, had I not consulted their comedies and romances, whose authors are, perhaps, too apt to stumble upon those foibles from which they themselves are not exempt, rather than the virtues they happen not to possess; who, instead of encouraging their readers by praising their real virtues, amuse themselves with painting imaginary characters too perfect for imitation. Romances are perhaps the last means of instruction than remains to a corrupt people. It were to be wished that none were suffered to prepare

pare this medicine but men of honest principles and true sensibility; authors, whose writings should be a picture of their own hearts; who, instead of fixing virtue in the heavens, beyond the reach of our nature, would, by smoothing the way, insensibly tempt us out of the gulph of vice.

But to return to the Parisian ladies; concerning whom I do not by any means agree in the common opinion. They are universally allowed to have the most enchanting address, the most seducing manner; to be the most refined coquets, to possess the most sublime gallantry, and the art of pleasing to a superlative degree. For my part, I think their address shocking, their coquettish airs disgusting, and their manner extremely immodest. I should imagine that the heart should shrink back at all their advances; and I can never be persuaded, that they can for a single moment talk of love, without shewing themselves incapable of either feeling or inspiring it.

On the other hand, we find them represented as frivolous, artful, false, thoughtful, inconstant, talking well, but without reflection or sentiment, and evaporating all their merit in idle chit-chat. But to me all this appears to be as external as their *rouge* or their hoop-petticoats. There are a kind of fashionable vices which are supposed necessary at Paris, but which are not incompatible with sense, reason, humanity, and good nature. These ladies are, in many cases, more discreet, and less given to tattling than those of any other country. They are better instructed, and the things they are taught have

have a stronger effect upon their judgment. In short, if I dislike them for having disfigured the proper characteristics of their sex, I esteem them for those virtues in which they resemble us; and, my opinion is, that they are better calculated to be men of merit, than amiable women.

To conclude: If Julia had never existed, if my heart had been capable of any other attachment than that for which it was created, I should never have taken a wife or mistress in Paris; but should gladly have chosen a friend, and such a treasure might possibly have consoled me for the want of the others*.

LETTER LXXXVII.

To JULIA.

SINCE your letter was received, I have been daily with Mr Silvester, to see after the small packet: but my impatience has been seven times disappointed. At length, however, on the eighth time of going, I received it; and no sooner did I get it into my hands, than, without staying to pay the postage, even without asking what it came to, or speaking a word to any body, I ran with it out of doors; and, as if I had been out of my senses, passed by the door of my lodgings, though it stood open be-

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* I shall not give my opinion of this letter; but I doubt much, whether a judgment which so liberally allows them the qualities they despise, and denies them those which they value, will be pleasing to the French ladies.

fore me, and traversed a number of streets that I knew nothing of, till in about half an hour I found myself at the farther end of Paris. I was then obliged to take a hackney-coach in order to get the more speedily home, which is the first time I have made use of those conveniences in a morning ; indeed it is with regret I use them even in an afternoon, to pay some distant visits ; for my legs are good, and I should be sorry that any improvement in my circumstances should make me neglect the use of them.

I was a good deal perplexed however, in the coach, as you had laid your injunctions on me to open the packet no where but at home. Besides, I was unwilling to be subject to any interruption while I was indulging myself in that exquisite satisfaction I find in every thing that comes from you. I held it therefore with an impatience and curiosity which I could scarce contain ; endeavouring to discover its contents through the covers, by pressing it every way with my hands ; from the continual motions of which you would have thought the packet contained fire, and burned the ends of my fingers. Not but that from its size, weight, and the contents of your former letter, I had some suspicion ; but then, how could I conceive you to have found either the opportunity or the artist ? But what I then could not conceive, is one of the miracles of almighty love : the more it surpasses my conception, the more it enchants my heart ; and one of the greatest pleasures it gives me arises from its mystery.

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Arrived at length at my lodgings, I flew to my chamber, locked the door, threw myself out of breath into a chair, and with a trembling hand broke open the seal. It was then, Julia, I felt the first effect of this powerful talisman. The palpitations of my heart increased at every paper I unfolded; till coming to the last, I was forced to stop and take breath a moment before I could open it. It is open — my suggestions are true, — it is so — it is the portrait of Julia. — O, my love! your divine image is before me! I gaze with rapture on your charms! my lips, my heart, pay them the first homage, my knees bend — Again my eyes are ravished with your heavenly beauties. How immediate, how powerful, is their magical effect! No, Julia, it requires not, as you pretend, a quarter of an hour to make itself perceived; a minute, an instant suffices, to draw from my breast a thousand ardent sighs, and to recal, with thy image, the remembrance of my past happiness. Ah! why must the rapture of having such a treasure in possession be allayed with so much bitterness? how lively is the representation it gives me of days that are no more? In gazing on the portrait, I think I again see my very Julia, and enjoy in imagination those delightful moments, whose remembrance serves now to embitter my life, and which heaven in its anger bestowed on me only to take them away. Alas! the next instant undeceives me: the pangs of absence throb with increased violence, after the agreeable delusion which suspended them is vanished; and I am in the state of those miserable wretches, whose tortures are

remitted only to render them the more cruel. Heavens! what flames have not my eager eyes darted on this unexpected object? how has the sight of it roused in me those impetuous emotions, which your presence used to produce! O, my Julia! were it possible for this talisman to transmit to your senses the phrenzy and illusion of mine — But why is it not possible? why may not those impressions, which the mind darts forth with such rapidity, reach as far as Julia? Ah, my charming friend! wherever you are, or however employed; at the time I am writing, at the time your portrait receives the same homage I pay to the real object of my adoration, do you not perceive your charming face bedewed with the tears of love and sorrow? do you not feel the ardour of a lover's kisses on your lips, your cheeks, your breast? do you not glow all over with the flame imparted from my burning lips? — Ha! what is that? — somebody knocks — I will hide my treasure — an impertinent breaks in upon me — accursed be the cruel intruder, for interrupting me in transports so delightful! — may he never be capable of love, — or may he be doomed like me to pine in absence!

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

To Mrs ORBE.

IT is to you, dear cousin, I am to give an account of the French opera: for although you have not mentioned it in your own letters,
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and Julia has kept your secret, I am not at a loss to whom to attribute that piece of curiosity. I have been once at the opera to satisfy myself, and twice to oblige you, but am in hopes this letter will be my excuse for going no more. If you command me, indeed I can bear it again; I can suffer, I can sleep there for your service; but to remain awake and attentive is to me an absolute impossibility.

Before I tell you what I think of this famous theatre, I will give you an account of what is said of it here; the opinion of the connoisseurs may perhaps rectify mine, where I happen to be mistaken.

The French opera passes at Paris for the most pompous, the most delightful, the most wonderful entertainment that was ever produced by the human genius. It is said to be the most superb monument of the magnificence of Louis XIV. In fact, every one is not so much at liberty, as you imagine, to give his opinion on so grave a subject. Every thing may be made a point of dispute here, except music and the opera; but with respect to these, it may be dangerous not to dissemble one's thoughts, as the French music is supported by an inquisition no less arbitrary than severe. Indeed, the first lesson which strangers are taught, is, that foreigners universally allow that nothing in the whole world is so fine as the opera at Paris. The truth is, discreet people are silent upon this topic, because they dare not laugh except among themselves.

It must be allowed, however, that they represent at the opera, at a vast expence, not only

all the marvellous things in nature, but many others still more wonderful which nature never produced. Surely Mr Pope meant this theatre, by that where he said one might see gods, devils, monsters, kings, shepherds, and fairies, all mixed together in one scene of confusion.

This assemblage, so magnificent and well-conducted, is regarded by the spectators as if all the things and characters exhibited were real. On seeing the representation of a heathen temple, they are seized with a profound reverence; and, if the goddess be tolerably pretty, half the men in the pit are immediately pagans. Here the audience is not so nice as at the French comedy. Those very spectators, who could not there consider the player as the character he represented, cannot at the opera consider him any otherwise. It seems as if they were shocked at a rational deception, and could give into nothing but what was grossly absurd; or perhaps they can more easily conceive players to be gods than heroes. Jupiter being of another nature, people may think of him as they please; but Cato was a man, and how few men are there, who, to judge from themselves, have any reason to think such a man as Cato ever existed.

This opera, therefore, is not composed, as in other places, of a company of mercenaries, hired to furnish out an entertainment for the public. It is true, they are paid by the public, and it is their business to attend the opera: but the nature of it is quite changed by its becoming a royal academy of music, a sort of sovereign tribunal that judges without appeal in its own cause, and is not very remarkable for justice

fice and integrity. Thus you see, how much in some countries the essence of things hangs on mere words, and how a respectable title may do honour to that which least deserves it.

The members of this illustrious academy are not degraded by their profession: in revenge, however, they are excommunicated, which is directly contrary to the custom of all other countries: but, perhaps, having had their choice, they had rather live honourably and be damned, than, as plebeians, go vulgarly to heaven. I have seen a modern chevalier on the French theatre, as proud of the profession of a player, as the unfortunate Laberius was formerly mortified at it, although the latter was forced into it by the commands of Cæsar, and recited only his own works *. But then the degraded ancient could not afterwards take his place in the circus among the Roman knights; whilst the
mo-

* Obligated by the tyrant to appear on the stage, he lamented his disgrace, in some very affecting verses, which justly irritated every honest mind against Cæsar. *After having lived, said he, sixty years with honour, I left my house this morning, a Roman knight, but shall return to it this evening an infamous stage-player. Alas! I have lived a day too long. O fortune! if it was my lot to be thus once disgraced, why did you not force me hither while youth and vigour had left me at least an agreeable person: but now, what a wretched object do I present to the insults of the people of Rome? a feeble voice, a weak body, a mere corpse, an animated skeleton, which has nothing left of me but my name.* The entire prologue which he spoke on this occasion, the injustice done him by Cæsar, who was piqued at the noble freedom with which he avenged his offended honour, the affront he received at the circus, the meanness of Cicero in upbraiding him, with the ingenious and satyrical reply of Laberius, are all preserved by Aulus Gellius, and compose, in my opinion, the most curious and interesting piece in his whole collection.

modern one found his every day at the French comedy, among the first nobility in the kingdom. And I will venture to say, never did they talk at Rome with so much respect of the majesty of the Roman people, as they do at Paris of the majesty of the opera.

This is what I have gathered, chiefly from conversation, concerning this splendid entertainment; I will now relate to you what I have seen of it myself.

Figure to yourself the inside of a large box, about fifteen feet wide, and long in proportion: this box is the stage; on each side are placed screens, at different distances, on which the objects of the scene are coarsely painted. Beyond this is a great curtain, bedaubed in the same manner; which extends from one side to the other, and is generally cut through, to represent caves in the earth, and openings in the heavens, as the perspective requires. So that, if any person, in walking behind the scenes, should happen to brush against the curtain, he might cause an earthquake so violent as to shake — our sides with laughing. The skies are represented by a parcel of bluish rags, hung up with lines and poles, like wet linen at the washerwoman's. The sun, for he is represented here sometimes, is a large candle in a lantern. The chariots of the gods and goddesses are made of four bits of wood, nailed together in the form of a square, and suspended by a strong cord, like a swing: across the middle is fastened a board, on which the deity sits a-straddle; and in the front of it hangs a piece of coarse canvas, bedaubed with paint, to represent the clouds
that

that attend on this magnificent car. The bottom of this machine is illuminated by two or three stinking, unsnuffed candles, which, as often as the celestial personage bustles about and shakes his swing, smoke him deliciously with incense worthy such a divinity.

As these chariots are the most considerable machines of the opera, you may judge by them of the rest. A troubled sea is made of long rollers covered with canvass or blue paper, laid parallel, and turned by the dirty understrappers of the theatre. Their thunder is a heavy cart, which rumbles over the floor, and is not the least affecting instrument of their agreeable music. The flashes of lightning are made by throwing pinches of powdered rosin into the flame of a link; and the falling thunderbolt is a cracker at the end of a squib.

The stage is furnished with little square trapdoors; which, opening on occasion, give notice that the infernal demons are coming out of the cellar. And when they are to be carried up into the air, they substitute dexterously in their room little devils of brown canvass stuffed with straw, or sometimes real chimney-sweepers, that are drawn up by ropes, and ride triumphant through the air till they majestically enter the clouds, and are lost among the dirty rags I mentioned. But what is really tragical is, that when the tackle is not well managed, or the ropes happen to break, down come infernal spirits and immortal gods together, and break their limbs and sometimes their necks. To all this I shall add their monsters; which certainly make some scenes very pathetic, such as their dragons, lizards,

lizards, tortoises, crocodiles, and great toads, all which stalk or crawl about the stage with a threatening air, and put one in mind of the temptation of St Anthony; every one of these figures being animated by a looby of a Savoyard, that has not even sense enough to play the brute.

Thus you see, cousin, in what consists, in a great degree, the splendid furniture of the opera; at least, thus much I could observe from the pit, with the help of my glass; for you must not imagine these expedients are much hid, or produce any great illusion: I only tell you here what I saw, and what every other unprejudiced spectator might have seen as well as myself. I was told, nevertheless, that a prodigious quantity of machinery is employed to effect all these motions, and was several times offered a sight of it; but I was never curious to see in what manner extraordinary efforts were made to produce insignificant effects.

The number of people engaged in the service of the opera is inconceivable. The orchestra and chorus together consist of near an hundred persons: there is a multitude of dancers, every part being doubly and trebly supplied*; that is to say, there is always one or two inferior actors ready to take the place of the principal, and who are paid for doing nothing, till the principal is pleased to do nothing in his turn, which is seldom long of happening. After a few representations, the chief actors, who are personages of great

* They know nothing of this in Italy; the public would not suffer it, and thus the entertainment is subject to less expence: it would cost too much to be thus ill-served.

great consequence, honour the public no more with their presence in that piece, but give up their parts to their substitutes, or to the substitutes of those substitutes. They receive always the same money at the door ; but the spectator does not always meet with the same entertainment. Every one takes a ticket, as he does in the lottery, without knowing what will be his prize ; and, be what it will, no body dares complain ; for you are to know, that the honourable members of this academy owe no manner of respect to the public, it is the public which owes respect to them.

I will say nothing to you of their music ; you are acquainted with it already. But you can have no idea of the frightful cries and hideous bellowings with which the theatre resounds during the representation. The actresses, throwing themselves into convulsions as it were, rend their lungs with squeaking : in the mean time, with their fists clenched against their stomachs, their heads thrown back, their faces red, their veins swelled, and their breasts heaving, one knows not which is most disagreeably affected, the eye or the ear. Their actions make those suffer as much who see them, as their singing does those who hear them ; and what is inconceivable is, that these howlings are almost the only thing the audience applaud. By the clapping of their hands, one would imagine them a parcel of deaf people, delighted to be able to hear the voice now and then strained to the highest pitch ; and that they strove to encourage the actors to redouble their efforts. For my part, I am persuaded that they applaud the
squeak-

squeaking of an actress at the opera, for the same reason as they do the tricks of a tumbler or posture-master at the fair: it is displeasing and painful to see them; one is uneasy while they last; but we are so glad to see all pass off without any accident, that we willingly give them applause.

Think how well this manner of singing is adapted to express all the soft and tender writings of Quinault. Imagine the muses, loves, and graces, imagine Venus herself, expressing her sentiments in this delicate manner, and judge of the effects. As to their devils, let us leave their music to something infernal enough to suit it: as also that of their magicians, conjurers, and witches; all which, however, meet with the greatest applause at the French opera.

To these ravishing sounds, as harmonious as sweet, we may very deservedly join those of the orchestra. Conceive to yourself a continual clashing of jarring instruments, attended with the drawling and perpetual groans of the base, a noise the most doleful and insupportable that I ever heard in my life, and which I could never bear half an hour together without getting a violent head-ach. All this forms a species of psalmody, which has commonly neither time nor tune. But when, by accident, they hit on an air a little lively, the feet of the audience are immediately in motion, and the whole house thunders with their clattering. The pit in particular, with much pains and a great noise, always imitate a certain performer in the orchestra *. Delighted to perceive for a moment
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* *Le Bucheron.*

that cadence which they so seldom feel, they strain their ears, voice, hands, feet, and in short their whole body, to keep that time which is every moment ready to escape them. Instead of this, the Italians and Germans, who are more easily affected with the measures of their music, pursue them without any effort, and have never any occasion to beat time: at least, Regianino has often told me, that, at the opera in Italy, where the music is so affecting and lively, you will never see, or hear, in the orchestra or among the spectators, the least motion of either hands or feet. But in this country every thing evinces the dullness of their musical organs: their voices are harsh and unpleasing, their tones affected and drawling, and their transitions hard and dissonant: there is no cadence nor melody in their songs; their martial instruments, the fifes of the infantry, the trumpets of the cavalry, their horns, their hautboys, the ballad-singers in the streets, and the fiddlers in their public-houses, have all something so horribly grating as to shock the most indelicate ear*. All talents are not bestowed on the same men, and the French in general are of all the people in Europe those who have the least aptitude for music. Lord B—— pretends, that the English have as little: but the difference is, that they know it, and care nothing about the matter; whereas the French give up a thousand just pretensions, and will submit to be censured in any

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* The light airs of the French music have not been unaptly compared to a cow's courant, or the hobblings of a fat goose attempting to fly.

other point whatever, sooner than admit they are not the first musicians in the world. There are even people at Paris who look upon the cultivation of music as the concern of the state, perhaps because the improvement of Timotheus's lyre was so at Sparta. However this be, the opera here may, for ought I know, be a good political institution, in that it pleases persons of taste no better. But to return to my description.

The *ballets*, which are the most brilliant parts of the opera, considered of themselves, afford a pleasing entertainment, as they are magnificent and truly theatrical; but, as they enter into the composition of the piece, it is in that light we must consider them. You remember the operas of Quinault; you know in what manner the diversions are there introduced; it is much the same, or rather worse, with his successors. In every act, the action of the piece is stopt short, just at the most interesting period, by an interlude, which is represented before the actors, who are seated on the stage, while the audience in the pit are kept standing. From these interruptions it frequently happens, that the characters of the piece are quite forgotten, and always that the spectators are kept looking at actors, that are looking at something else. The fashion of these interludes is very simple. If the prince is in a good humour, it partakes of the gaiety of his disposition, and is a dance; if he is displeased, it is contrived in order to bring him to temper again, and it is a dance. I know not whether it be the fashion at court to make a ball for the entertainment of the king when he is out of humour; but this I know, with respect
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to our opera kings, that one cannot sufficiently admire their stoical firmness and philosophy, in sitting so tranquil to see comic dances and attend to songs, while the fate of their kingdoms, crowns, and lives, is sometimes determined behind the scenes. But they have besides many other occasions for the introduction of dances; the most serious actions of human life are here performed in a dance. The parsons dance, the soldiers dance, the gods dance, the devils dance, the mourners dance at their funerals, and in short all their characters dance upon all occasions.

Dancing is thus the fourth of the fine arts employed in the constitution of the lyric drama; the other three are arts of imitation. And what is imitated in dancing? nothing. It is therefore foreign to the purpose; for what business is there for minuets or rigadoons in a tragedy? Nay, I will venture to say, dancing would be equally absurd in such compositions, even though something was imitated by it: for of all the dramatic unities, the most indispensable is that of language or expression; and an opera made up partly of singing, partly of dancing, is even more ridiculous than that in which they sing half French half Italian.

Not content to introduce dancing as an essential part of the composition, they even attempt to make it the principal, having operas, which they call *ballets*, and which so badly answer their title, that dancing is no less out of character in them than in all the rest. Most of these ballets consist of as many different subjects as acts; and these subjects are connected together

ther by certain metaphysical relations, of which the spectator would never form the least suspicion or conjecture, if the author did not care to apprise him of it in the prologue. The seasons, ages, senses, elements, are the subjects of a dance; but I should be glad to know what propriety there is in all this, or what ideas can by this means be conveyed to the mind of the spectator? Some of them again are purely allegorical, as the *carnival*, the *folly*, and are the most intolerable of all; because with a good deal of wit and finessè, they contain neither sentiment, description, plot, business, nor any thing that can either interest the audience, set off the music to advantage, flatter the passions, or heighten the illusion. In these pretended ballets, the action of the piece is performed in singing; the dancers continually finding occasion to break in upon the singers, though without meaning or design. The result of all this, however, is, that these ballets being less interesting than their tragedies, these interruptions are little remarked. Were the piece itself more affecting, the spectator would be more offended; but the one defect serves to hide the other, and, in order to prevent the spectators being tired with the dancing, the authors artfully contrive it so that the piece itself may the more heartily tire them.

This would lead me insensibly to make some inquiries into the true composition of the lyric drama, but these would be too prolix to be comprised in this letter; I have therefore written a little dissertation on that subject, which you will find inclosed, and may communicate to Reginaldo. I shall only add, with respect to the
French

French opera, that the greatest fault I observed in it is a false taste for magnificence; whence they attempt to represent the marvellous, which, being only the object of imagination, is introduced with as much propriety in an epic poem, as it is ridiculously attempted on the stage. I should hardly have believed, had not I seen it, that there could be found artists weak enough to attempt an imitation of the chariot of the sun, or spectator so childish as to go to see it. Bruyere could not conceive how so fine a sight as the opera could be tiresome. For my part, who am no Bruyere, I can conceive it very well; and will maintain, that to every man who has a true taste for the fine arts, the French music, their dancing, and their marvellous scenery put together, compose the most tiresome representation in the world. After all, perhaps the French do not deserve a more perfect entertainment, especially with respect to the performance: not because they want ability to judge of what is good, but because the bad pleases them better. For, as they love rather to censure than applaud, the pleasure of criticising compensates for every defect; and they had rather laugh after they get home, than be pleased with the piece during the representation.

L E T T E R LXXXIX.

From JULIA.

YES, yes, I see it well: the happy Julia is still dear to you, still enjoys your love; the
H 3 same,

same fire that once sparkled in your eyes, glows throughout your last letter, and kindles all the ardour of mine. Yes, my friend, in vain doth fortune separate us; let our hearts press forward to each other, let us preserve by such a communication their natural warmth against the chilling coldness of absence and despair; and let every thing that tends to loosen the ties of our affections, serve only to draw them closer and bind them more fast.

You will smile at my simplicity, when I tell you, that since the receipt of your letter, I have experienced something of those charming effects therein mentioned; and that the jest of the talisman, although purely my own invention, is turned upon myself and become serious. A hundred times a-day am I seized, when alone, with a fit of trembling, as if you were before me. I imagine you are gazing on my portrait, and am foolish enough to feel, in conceit, the impression of those kisses and caresses you bestow on it. Sweet illusion! charming effects of fancy! the last resource of the unhappy. Oh, if it be possible, be to us a pleasing substitute for reality! you are yet something to those to whom real happiness is wanting.

As to the manner in which I obtained the portrait, it was indeed the contrivance of love; but, believe me, if it were that mine could work miracles, it would not have made choice of this. I will let you into the secret. We had here some time ago a miniature painter, on his return from Italy: he brought letters from Lord B——, who perhaps, in sending him, had some view to what has happened. Mr Orbe embraced

ced this opportunity to have a portrait of my cousin; I was desirous of one also. In return, she and my mother would each have one of me, of which the painter at my request took secretly a second copy. Without troubling myself about the original, I chose of the three that which I thought the most perfect likeness, with a design to send it you. I made but little scruple, I own, of this piece of deceit: for, as to the likeness of the portrait, a little more or less can make no great difference with my mother and cousin; but the homage you might pay to any other resemblance than mine, would be a kind of infidelity, by so much the more dangerous, as my picture might be handsomer than me; and I would not on any account that you should take a liking to charms which I do not possess. With respect to the drapery, I could have liked to have been less negligently dressed; but I was not heard, and my father himself insisted on the portrait's being finished as it is, except the head-dress. However, nothing of the habit was taken from my own, the painter having dressed the picture as he thought proper, and ornamented my person with the works of his own imagination.

LETTER XC.

To JULIA.

I MUST, my dear Julia, still talk to you of your portrait; no longer, however, in that rapturous strain which the first sight of it inspired,

red, and with which you yourself were so much affected; but, on the contrary, with the regret of a man deceived by false hopes, and whom nothing can recompense for what he has lost. Your portrait, like yourself, is both graceful and beautiful; it is also a tolerable likeness, and is painted by the hand of a master; but to be satisfied with it, I ought never to have known the original.

The first fault I find in it is, that it resembles you, and yet is not yourself; that it has your likeness, and is insensible. In vain the painter thought to copy your features; where is that sweetness of sentiment that enlivens them, and without which, regular and beautiful as they are, they are nothing? The ineffable loveliness of your countenance, my Julia, is derived from your heart; and what painting can imitate that? This defect therefore must be attributed to the imperfection of the art; but it is the fault of the artist not to have been exact in every thing that depended on himself. For instance, he has brought the hair too far forward on the temples, which gives the forehead a less agreeable and delicate air. He has also forgotten two or three little veins, seen through the transparent skin in winding branches of purple, resembling those of the Iris we once stood admiring in the gardens of *Clarens*. The colouring of the cheeks is also too near the eyes, and is not softened into that glowing blush of the rose toward the lower part of the face, which distinguishes the lovely original. One would take it for an artificial *rouge*, plaistered on like the carmine of the French ladies. Nor is this defect a small one,

as it makes the eyes appear less soft, and the looks more bold.

But tell me, what has he done with those dimples wherein the little cupids lurk at the corners of your mouth, and which in my fortunate days I used to stifle with kisses? He has not given half their beauty to these charming lips. He has not given the mouth that agreeable serious turn, which, changing in an instant into a smile, ravishes the heart with inconceivable enchantment, with an instantaneous rapture which cannot be expressed. It is true, your portrait cannot pass from the serious to a smile. This is, alas! the very thing of which I complain. To paint all your charms you should be drawn every instant of your life.

But to pass over the injustice the painter has done you in overlooking your beauties, he has done you more in having omitted your defects. He has left out that almost imperceptible mole under your right eye, as well as that on the right side of your neck. He has not—heavens; was the man a statue!—he has forgot the little scar under your lip; he has made your hair and eye-brows of the same colour; which they are not. Your eye-brows are more upon the chestnut, and your hair rather of the ash colour.

Bionda testa, occhi azzurri e bruno ciglio.

Light hair, blue eyes, and eye-brows lovely brown.

He has made the lower part of the face exactly oval; not observing the small hollow between your cheeks and chin, which makes their
out

out lines less regular and more agreeable. These are the most palpable defects; but he has omitted several others, for which I owe him no goodwill: for I am not only in love with your beauties, but with Julia herself just as she is. If you would not be obliged for any charm to the pencil, I would not have you lose by it the smallest defect: my heart can never be affected by charms that are not your own.

With respect to the drapery, I shall take the more notice of it, as, whether in a dishabille or otherwise, I have ever seen you dressed with more taste than you are in the portrait: the head-dress is too large; you will say it is composed only of flowers; that is true; but there are too many. Do not you remember the ball, at which you were dressed like a country girl, and your cousin told me I danced like a philosopher? you had then no other head-dress than your long tresses, turned up and fastened at top with a golden bodkin, in the manner of the villagers of Berne. No, the sun in all its radiance displays not half that lustre with which you then struck the eyes and captivated hearts of the beholders; and surely there is no one who saw you that day that can ever forget you during his whole life. It is thus, my Julia, your head ought to have been dressed. It is your charming hair that should adorn your face, and not those spreading roses. Tell my cousin, for I discover her choice and direction, that the flowers with which she has thus covered and profaned your tresses, are in no better taste than those she gathers in *Adonis*. One might overlook them, did they serve

as an ornament to beauty ; but I cannot permit them to hide it.

As to the bust, it is singular that a lover should be more nice in this particular than a father ; but, to say the truth, I think you are too carelessly dressed. The portrait of Julia should be modest as herself. These hidden charms should be sacred to love. You say the painter drew them from his imagination. I believe it ; indeed, I believe it. Had he caught the least glimpse of thine, his eyes would have gazed on them for ever, but his hand would not have attempted to paint them ; why was it necessary the rash artist should form them in imagination ? This was not only an offence against decency, but I will maintain it also to be want of taste. Yes, your countenance is too modest to support the disorder of your breast ; it is plain that one of these objects ought to hinder the other from being seen : it is the privilege of love alone to see both together ; and when its glowing hand uncovers the charms that modesty conceals, the sweet confusion of your eyes shews that you forget not that you expose them.

Such are the criticisms that a continual attention has occasioned me to make on your portrait : in consequence of which I have formed a design to alter it, agreeable to my own ideas. I have communicated my intentions to an able master, and from what he has already done, I hope soon to see you more like yourself. For fear of spoiling the picture, however, we try our alterations first on a copy, which I have made him take ; and we do not make them in the original till we are quite sure of their effect.

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Although I design but indifferently, my artist cannot help admiring the subtilty of my observations; but he does not know that love, who dictates them, is a greater master than he. I seem to him also sometimes very whimsical: he tells me I am the first lover that ever chose to hide objects which others think cannot be too much exposed; and when I answer him, it is in order to have a full view of you that I dress you up with so much care, he stares at me as if he thought me a fool. Ah! my Julia, how much more affecting would be your portrait, if I could but find out the means to display in it your mind, as well as your face; to paint at once your modesty and your charms! what would not the latter gain by such an amendment! at present those only are seen which the painter imagined, and the ravished spectator thinks them such as they are. I know not what secret enchantment is about your person, but every thing that touches you seems to partake of its virtue: one need only perceive the hem of your garment to revere the wearer of it. One perceives in your dress how the veil of the graces affords a covering to the model of beauty; and the taste of your modest apparel displays to the mind all those charms it conceals.

L E T T E R XCI.

To JULIA.

JULIA! O Julia! you whom once I could call mine, though now I profane your virtuous name!

name ! my pen drops from my trembling hand ; the paper is blotted with my tears ; I can hardly trace the first words of a letter, which ought never to be written ; alas ! I can neither speak nor be silent. Come, thou dear and respectable image of my love ; come, purify and strengthen a heart depressed with shame and torn to pieces by remorse. Support my resolution that fails me, and give my contrition the power to avow the involuntary crime which thy absence has led me to commit.

How contemptible will you think me ! yet cannot you hold me in greater contempt than I do myself. Abject as I may seem in your eyes, I am yet a hundred times more so in my own : for, in reflecting on my own demerits, my greatest mortification is to see, to feel you still in my heart, in a place henceforward so little worthy of your image ; and to think that the remembrance of the truest pleasures of love could not prevent me from falling into a snare that had no lure, from being led into a crime that presented no temptation.

So excessive is my confusion, that I am afraid, even in recurring to your clemency, lest the perusal of the lines in which I confess my guilt should offend you. Let your purity and chastity forgive me a recital which should have spared your modesty, were it not the means to expiate, in some degree, my infidelity. I know I am unworthy of your goodness : I am vile, base, and despicable ; but I will not be an hypocrite, or deceive you ; for I had rather you should deprive me of your love, and even life itself, than to impose on you but for a moment. Lest

I should be tempted, therefore, to seek excuses to palliate my crime, which will only render me the more criminal, I will confine myself to an exact relation of what has happened to me ; a relation that shall be as sincere as my repentance, which is all I shall say in my defence.

I had commenced acquaintance with some officers in the guards, and other young people among my countrymen, in whom I found a good innate disposition, which I was sorry to see spoiled by the imitation of I know not what false airs, which nature never designed for them. They laughed at me in their turn, for preserving in Paris the simplicity of our ancient Helvetic manners ; and, construing my maxims and behaviour into an indirect censure of theirs, resolved to make me a convert to their own practices, at all hazards. After several attempts which did not succeed, they made another too well concerted to fail of success. Yesterday morning they came to me with a proposal to go sup with the lady of a certain colonel they mentioned ; who, from the report, they were pleased to say, of my good sense, had a great desire to be acquainted with me. Fool enough to give into this idle story, I represented to them the propriety of first making her a visit ; but they laughed at my punctilios, telling me the frankness of a Swiss did not at all agree with such formality, and that so much ceremony would only serve to give her a bad opinion of me. At nine o'clock then in the evening we waited on the lady. She came out to receive us on the stair-case, through an excess of civility which I had never seen practised before. Having

ving entered the apartment, I observed a servant lighting up pieces of old wax candles over the chimney, and over all an air of preparation which did not at all please me. The mistress of the house appeared handsome, though a little past her prime : there were also several other women with her much about the same age, and similar in figure ; their dress, which was rich enough, had more of finery in it than taste ; but I have already observed to you that this is not a sure sign by which to judge of the condition of the women of this country.

The first compliments were made as usual, custom teaching one to cut them short, or to turn them into pleasantry, before they grow tiresome. Something unusual however appeared as soon as our conversation became general and serious. I thought the ladies seemed to wear an air of restraint, as if such discourse were not familiar to them : and now, for the first time since I have been at Paris, I saw women at a loss to support a rational conversation. To find an easy topic, they brought up at length their family-affairs ; and as I knew none of them, I had little share in the conversation. Never before did I hear so much talk of the colonel, and the colonel ; which not a little surprised me, in the country where it is usual to distinguish people rather by their names than by their profession, and in which almost every man of rank in the army has some other title of distinction besides.

This affectation of dignity soon gave way to a behaviour more natural to them : they began to talk low, and running insensibly into an air

of indecent familiarity, they laughed and whispered every time they looked at me, while the lady of the house asked me the situation of my heart, with a certain boldness of manner not at all adapted to make a conquest of it. The table was spread, and that freedom which seems to make no distinction of persons, but generally puts every one without design in the proper place, fully convinced me what sort of company I was in. But it was too late to recede: putting my confidence therefore in my aversion, I determined to apply that evening to observation, and to employ in the study of that order of women, the only opportunity I ever had, or might have. Little, however, was the fruit of my observation. They were so insensible to their present situation, so void of apprehensions for the future, and, excepting the tricks of their profession, so stupid in all respects, that contempt soon effaced the pity I first entertained for them. In speaking even of pleasure itself, I saw they were incapable of feeling it. They appeared rapacious after every thing that could gratify their avarice: and, excepting what regarded their interest, I heard not a word drop from their lips that came from the heart. I was astonished to think how men, not abandoned like themselves, could support so disgustful a society. It were, in my opinion, the most cruel punishment that could be inflicted, to oblige them to keep such company.

We sat a long while at supper, and the company at length began to grow noisy. For want of love, the wine went briskly round to inflame the guests: the discourse was not tender but im-

immodest, and the women strove, by the disorder of their dress, to excite those passions which should have caused that disorder. All this had a very different effect upon me, and all their endeavours to seduce me, served only to heighten my distaste. Sweet modesty! (said I to myself,) from whom love draws its sublimest raptures, how impotent are female charms when thou hast left them! If the sex did but know thy power, what pains would they not take to preserve thee inviolate; if not for the sake of virtue, at least for their interest! But modesty is not to be assumed. There is not a more ridiculous artifice in the world than that of the prude who affects it. What a difference, thought I, is there between the impudence of these creatures, with their licentious expressions, and those timid and tender looks, those conversations so full of modesty, so delicate, so sentimental, which—but I dare not finish the sentence; I blush at the comparison—I reproach myself, as if it were criminal, with the delightful remembrance of her who pursues me wherever I go. But how shall I now dare to think of her?—alas! it is impossible to erase your image from my heart; let me then strive to conceal it there.

The noise, the discourse I heard, together with the objects that presented themselves to my view, insensibly inflamed me; my two neighbours plied me incessantly with wine. I found my head confused, and, though I drank all the while a good deal of water in my wine, I now took more water, and at length determined to drink water only. It was then I perceived the pretended water set before me was white wine,

and that I had drank it from the first. I made no complaints, as they would only have subjected me to raillery, but gave over drinking entirely. But it was too late, the mischief was already done, and the intoxicating effects of what I had already drank soon deprived me of the little sense that remained. I was surpris'd, in recovering my senses, to find myself in a retired closet, locked in the embraces of one of those creatures I had supped with, and in the same instant had the mortification to find myself as criminal as I could possibly be.

I have finish'd this horrible relation. Would to heaven it might never more offend your eyes, nor torture my memory! O Julia! from thee I wait my doom: I implore your severity; I merit it. Whatever be my punishment, it will be less cruel than the remembrance of my crime.

L E T T E R XCII.

The ANSWER.

BE easy as to the fear of having offended me. Your letter rather excited my grief than my anger. It is not me, it is yourself you have offended, by a debauch in which the heart had no share. I am at this, however, but the more afflicted; for I had much rather you should affront Julia than debase yourself; and the injury you have done to your own person is that only which I cannot forgive.

To regard only the fault of which you accuse yourself you are not so culpable as you imagine:

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as to that, I can only reproach you with imprudence. But what I blame you for, is of great moment, and proceeds from a failing that has taken deeper root than you imagine, and which it is the part of a friend to lay before you.

Your first error lies in having taken a wrong path, in which the farther you advance the more you will go astray; and I tremble to see that you are inevitably lost, if you do not tread back the steps you have taken. You have suffered yourself to be led insensibly into the very snares I dreaded. The more gross and palpable allurements of vice I knew could not seduce you; but the bad company you keep hath begun, by deluding your reason, to corrupt your virtue, and hath already made the first essay of its maxims on your behaviour.

Though you have told me nothing in particular of the acquaintance you have made in Paris, it is easy to judge of them by your letters; and of those who point out the objects, by your manner of describing them. I have not concealed from you how little satisfied I have been with your remarks; you have nevertheless continued them in the same style, which has only increased my displeasure. In fact, one would rather take your observations for the sarcasms of some petit-maitre, than for the animadversions of a philosopher; and it is hardly possible to believe them written by the same hand that wrote your former letters. What! do you think to study mankind by the confined behaviour of a few societies of finical prudes and other idlers? Do none of your remarks penetrate beyond the exterior and changeable varnish which ought hardly

ly to have engaged your attention? Was it worth while to collect with so much care those peculiarities of manners and decorum, which ten years hence will no longer exist; while the unalterable springs of the human heart, the constant and secret workings of the passions, have escaped your researches? Let us turn to your letter concerning women; in what have you instructed me to know them? You have given indeed a description of their dress, which all the world might be as well acquainted with; and have made some malicious observations on the address and behaviour of some, as also of the irregularities of a few others, which you have unjustly attributed to them all, as if no person of virtuous sentiments was to be found in Paris, and every woman flaunted about there in her chariot, and sat in the front boxes. Have you told me any thing that can throw real light upon their true character, taste, or maxims? and is it not strange, that in describing the women of a country, a man of sense should omit what regards their domestic concerns and education of their children? The only circumstance in that letter characteristic of its author is the apparent satisfaction with which you commend the goodness of their natural disposition, which, I must confess, doth honour to yours. And yet you have in that done no more than barely rendered justice to the sex in general? for in what country are not gentleness of manners and compassion for the distressed the amiable qualities of the women!

What a difference had there been in the picture, if you had described what you had seen
rather

rather than what you had heard; or, at least, if you had only consulted people of sense on the occasion? Was it for you, who have taken so much pains to cultivate your genius, to throw away your time deliberately in the company of a parcel of inconsiderate young fellows, who take pleasure in the society of persons of virtue and understanding, not to imitate, but only to seduce and corrupt them? You lay a stress on the equality of age, with which you should have nothing to do; and forgot that of sense and knowledge, which is more peculiarly essential. In spite of your violent passions, you are certainly the most pliable man in the world; and, notwithstanding the ripeness of your judgment, permit yourself to be conducted so implicitly by those you converse with, that you cannot keep company with young people of your own age without condescending to become a mere infant in their hands. Thus you mistake in your choice of proper companions, and debase yourself in not fixing upon such as have more wisdom than yourself.

I do not reproach you with having been inadvertently taken into a dishonest house; but with having been conducted thither by a party of young officers, who ought never to have known you; or at least, whom you should never have permitted to direct your amusements. As to your project of making them converts to your own principles, I discover in it more zeal than prudence; if you are of too serious a turn to be their companion, you are too young to be their tutor, and you ought not to think of reforming

ing others till there is nothing left to reform in yourself.

The next fault, which is of more moment and less pardonable, is to have passed voluntarily the evening in a place so unworthy of you, and not to have left the house the moment you knew what it was. Your excuses on this head are mean and pitiful. You say *it was too late to recede*; as if any decorum were necessary to be observed in such a place, or as if decorum ought ever to take place of virtue, and that it were ever too late to abstain from doing evil. As to the security you found in your aversion to the manners of such a company, I will say nothing of it; the event has shewn you how well it was founded. Speak more freely to one who so well knows how to read your heart; it was shame that kept you from leaving your companions; you were afraid they would laugh at you; a momentary hiss struck you with fear, and you chose rather to expose yourself to remorse than raillery. Do you know what a maxim you followed on this occasion? that which first vitiates every innocent mind, drowns the voice of conscience in public clamour, and represses the resolution of doing well by the fear of censure. Such a mind may overcome temptations, yet yield to the force of bad examples; may blush at being really modest, yet become impudent through bashfulness; a false bashfulness that is more destructive to a virtuous mind than bad inclinations. Look well then to the security of yours; for, whatever you may pretend, the fear of ridicule which you affect to despise, prevails over you in spite of yourself. You would rather brave a hundred dangers

dangers than the raillery of a moment, and never was seen so much timidity united to so intrepid a mind.

Without making a parade of precepts which you know better than I, I shall content myself with proposing a method more easy and sure, perhaps, than all the arguments of philosophy. This is, on such occasions, to make in thought a slight transposition of circumstances, to anticipate a few minutes of time. If, at that unfortunate supper, you had but fortified yourself against a moment's raillery, by the idea of the state of mind you should be in as soon as you got into the street; had you represented to yourself that inward contentment you should feel at having escaped the snares laid of vice, the consciousness of having avoided the danger, the pleasure it would give you to write me an account of it, that which I should myself receive in reading it; is it to be supposed all these circumstances would not have over-balanced the mortification of being laughed at for a moment; a mortification you would never have dreaded, could you but have foreseen the consequences? But what is this mortification, which gives consequence to the raillery of people for whom one has no esteem? This reflection would infallibly have saved you, in return for a moment's imaginary disgrace, much real and more durable shame, remorse, and danger; it would have saved (for why should I dissemble!) your friend, your Julia, many tears.

You determined, you tell me, to apply that evening to observation. What an employment! what observation! How your excuses make me
blush!

blush ! Will you not also, when an opportunity offers, have the same curiosity to make observations on robbers in their dens ? and to see the methods they take to seize their prey, and strip the unhappy passengers that fall into their hands ? Are you ignorant that there are objects too detestable for a man of probity to look on, and that the indignation of virtue cannot endure the sight of vice ?

The philosopher remarks indeed the public licentiousness which he cannot prevent ; he sees it, and his countenance betrays the concern it gives him : but as to that of individuals, he either opposes it or turns away his eyes from the sight, lest he should give it a sanction by his presence.

Besides, what necessity was there to be eye-witness of such scenes, in order to judge of what passed, or the conversation that was held there ? For my part, I can judge more easily of the whole, from the intention and design of such a society, than from the little you tell me of it ; and the idea of those pleasures that are to be found there, gives me a sufficient insight into the characters of such as go to seek them.

I know not if your commodious scheme of philosophy has already adopted the maxims, which, it is said, are established in large towns, for the toleration of such places : but I hope, at least, you are not one of those who debase themselves so much as to put them in practice, under the pretext of I know not what chimerical necessity, that is known only to men of debauched lives ; as if the two sexes were in this respect of
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a different constitution; and that, during absence or celibacy, a virtuous man is under a necessity of indulging himself in liberties which are denied to a virtuous woman. But if this error does not lead you to prostitutes, I am afraid it will continue to lead your imagination astray. Alas! if you are determined to be despicable, be so at least without pretext; and add not the vice of lying to that of drunkenness. All those pretended necessities have no foundation in nature, but in the voluntary depravation of the senses. Even the fond illusions of love are refined by a chaste mind, and pollute it only when the heart is first depraved. On the contrary, chastity is its own support; the desires constantly repressed accustom themselves to remain at rest, and temptations are only multiplied by the habit of yielding to them. Friendship has made me twice overcome the reluctance I had to write on such a subject, and this shall be the last time; for on what plea can I hope to obtain that influence over you, which you have refused to virtue, to love, and to reason?

I now return to the important point with which I began this letter. At one-and-twenty years of age you sent me, from the Valais, grave and judicious descriptions of men and things: at twenty-five you write me from Paris a pack of trifling letters, wherein good sense is sacrificed to a certain quaintness and pleasantry, very incompatible with your character. I know not how you have managed; but since you have resided among people of refined talents, yours appear to be diminished: you profited among

clowns, and have lost by the wits. This is not, however, the fault of the place you are in, but of the acquaintance you have made: for nothing requires a greater judgment than to make a proper choice in a mixture of the excellent and execrable. If you would study the world, keep company with men of sense, who have known it by long experience and observations made at leisure; not with giddy-headed boys, who see only the superficies of things, and laugh at what they themselves make ridiculous. Paris is full of sensible men, accustomed to reflection, and to whom every day presents a fertile field for observation. You will never make me believe that such grave and studious persons run about, as you do, from house to house, and from club to club, to divert the women and young fellows, and turn all philosophy into chit-chat. They have too much dignity thus to debase their characters, prostitute their talents, and give a sanction by their example to modes which they ought to correct. But if even most of them should, there are certainly many who do not, and it is those you ought to have chosen for companions.

Is it not extraordinary that you should fall into the very same error in your behaviour, which you blame in the writings of the comic poets, from which you say one would imagine Paris was peopled only by persons of distinction? These are your constant theme, while you take not the least notice of those of your own rank; as if the ridiculous prejudices of nobility had not cost you sufficiently dear to make you hate them for ever; or that you thought you degraded
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yourself in keeping company with honest citizens and tradesmen, the most respectable order of men, perhaps, in the whole country. It is in vain you endeavour to excuse yourself, in that your acquaintance are those of Lord B———: with the assistance of these, you might easily have made others of an inferior rank. So many people are desirous to rise, that it is always easy to descend; and by your own confession, the only way to come at the true manners of a nation is to study the private life of the most numerous order among them; for to confine your observations to those who only personate assumed characters, is only to observe the actions of a company of comedians.

I would have your curiosity exerted still farther. How comes it, that in so opulent a city, the poor people are so miserable; while such extreme distress is hardly ever experienced among us, where, on the other hand, we have no examples of immense wealth? This question is, in my opinion, well worth your asking; but it is not the people you converse with that are to resolve it. It is in the splendid apartments of the rich that the novice goes to learn the manners of the world; but the man of sense and experience betakes himself to the cottages of the poor. These are the places for the detection of those iniquitous practices, that in polite circles are varnished over and hid beneath a specious shew of words. It is here that the rich and powerful, by coming to the knowledge of the basest arts of oppression, feel for the unhappy what in public they only affect. If I may believe our old officers, you will learn

many things in the garrets of a fifth floor, which are buried in profound silence at the *hotels* in the suburbs of St Germain: you will find that many fine talkers would be struck dumb, if all those they have made unhappy were present to contradict their boasted pretensions to humanity.

I know the sight of misery that excites only fruitless pity is disagreeable; and that even the rich turn away their eyes from the unhappy objects to whom they refuse relief: but money is not the only thing the unfortunate stand in need of; and they are but indolent in well-doing who can exert themselves only with their purse in hands. Consolation, advice, concern, friends, protection, these are all so many resources which compassion points out to those who are not rich, for relief of the indigent. The oppressed often stand in need only of a tongue to make known their complaints. They often want no more than a word they cannot speak, a reason they are ashamed to give, to gain entrance at the door of a great man. The intrepid countenance of disinterested virtue may remove infinite obstacles, and the eloquence of a man of probity make even a tyrant tremble in the midst of his guards.

If you would then act as a man, learn to descend again. Humanity, like a pure salutary stream, flows always downwards to its level: fertilising the humble vales, while it leaves dry those barren rocks, whose threatening heads cast a frightful shade, or tumbling headlong down involve the plain in ruins.

Thus, my friend, may you make use of the
past

past conduct, by drawing thence instructions for the future ; and learn how goodness of heart may be of advantage to the understanding : whoever lives among people in office, cannot be too cautious of the corruptible maxims they inculcate ; and it is only the constant exercise of their benevolence that can secure the best hearts from the contagion of ambition. Try this new kind of study ; it is more worthy of you than those you have hitherto adopted ; and, believe me, as the genius is impoverished in proportion as the mind is corrupted, you will soon find, on the contrary, how much the practice of virtue elevates and improves it : you will experience how much the interest you take in the misfortunes of others will assist you in tracing their source, and will thereby learn to escape the vices that produce them.

I ought to take all the freedom with you that friendship authorises in the critical situation in which you at present appear ; least a second step towards debauchery should plunge you beyond recovery. At the same time, I cannot conceal from you, my friend, how much your ready and sincere confession has affected me ; as I am sensible how much shame and confusion it must have cost you, and from thence how heavy this unlucky error must sit upon your heart. An involuntary crime, however, is easily forgiven and forgot. But, for the future, remember well that maxim, from which I shall never recede ; He who allows himself a second time to be deceived on these occasions, cannot be said to have been deceived the first.

Adieu, my friend ; be careful, I conjure you,

of your health; and be assured I shall not retain the least remembrance of a fault I have once forgiven.

P. S. I have seen in the hands of Mr Orbe the copies of several of your letters to Lord B——, which oblige me to retract part of the censure I have passed on the matter and manner of your observations. These letters, I must confess, treat of important subjects, and appear to be full of serious and judicious reflections. But hence it is evident, that you either treat my cousin and me disdainfully, or that you set little value on our esteem, in sending us such trivial relations as must tend to forfeit it, while you transmit so much better to your friend. It is, in my opinion, doing little honour to your instructions to think your scholars unworthy to admire your talents: for you ought to affect at least, were it only through vanity, to think us capable of it.

Political matters, I confess, are not proper subjects for women; and my uncle has tired us with them so heartily, that I can easily conceive you were afraid of doing so too. To speak freely, also, these are not the topics I prefer: their utility is too foreign to affect me, and their arguments too subtle to make any lasting impression. Bound to respect the government under which it is my fate to have been born, I give myself no trouble to inquire whether there are any better. To what end should I be instructed to the knowledge of governments, with so little power to establish them? and why should I afflict myself with the consideration of evils
too

too great for me to remedy, when I am surrounded with others that are in my power to redress? But I love you; the interest I should not take in the subject, I should take in him who treats it. I collect with a pleasing admiration all the fruits of your genius; and, proud of merit so deserving of my heart, I beseech of love only so much wit as to make me relish yours. Refuse me not then the pleasure of knowing and admiring your works of merit. Why will you mortify me so much as to give me reason to think, that, if heaven should ever unite us, you will not judge your companion worthy to know your sentiments and adopt them.

LETTER XCIII.

From JULIA.

ALL is lost! all is discovered! your letters are gone! they were there last night, and could have been taken away but to-day. It is my mother: it can be nobody else. If my father should see them, my life is in danger. But why should he not see them, if I must renounce—Heavens! my mother sends for me. Whither shall I fly? how shall I support her presence? O that I could hide myself in the centre of the earth! I tremble every limb, and am unable to move one step—the shame, the mortification, the cutting reproaches—I have deserved it, I will support it all. But oh! the pangs, the tears of an afflicted mother—O my heart, how piercing!—She waits for me; I can stay no longer—

longer—She will know—I must tell her all—Regianino will be dismissed. Write no more till you hear further—who knows if ever—yet I might—what, deceive her!—deceive my mother!—alas! if our safety lies in supporting a falsehood, farewell, we are indeed undone!

L E T T E R XCIV.

From Mrs ORBE.

O WHAT evils, what distress, you cause to all those who love you! what tears have already been shed on your account in an unfortunate family, whose tranquillity has been disturbed by you alone! Dread to add to these tears by covering us with mourning: tremble least the death of an afflicted parent should be the last effect of the poison you have poured into the heart of her child, and that your extravagant passion will at length fill you with eternal remorse. My friendship made me support your folly, while there remained a shadow of hope to nourish it; but how can it allow a vain constancy which honour and reason condemn, and which, producing nothing but pain and misfortune, can only deserve the name of obstinacy?

You know in what manner the secret of your passion, so long concealed from the suspicions of my aunt, has been discovered by your letters. How sensibly must such a stroke be felt by a tender and virtuous mother! Less irritated against you than against herself, she blames her blind negligence, she deploras her fatal delusion; her
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deepest affliction arises from her having had too high an esteem for her daughter; and her grief has filled Julia with a hundred times more sorrow than all her reproaches.

The distress of my poor cousin is not to be conceived. No idea can be formed of it without seeing her. Her heart seems stifled with grief, and the violence of the sensations by which it is oppressed, gives her an air of stupidity more terrifying than the most piercing cries. She continues night and day by her mother's bed with a mournful look, her eyes fixed on the floor, and profoundly silent; yet serving her with greater attention and vivacity than ever; then instantly relapsing into a state of dejection, she appears to be no longer the same person. It is very evident, that the mother's illness supports the spirits of her daughter; and if an ardent desire to serve her did not give her strength, the extinguished lustre of her eyes, her paleness, her extreme grief, make me apprehensive she would herself stand in great need of the assistance she bestows. My aunt likewise perceives it; and I see, from the earnestness with which she recommends Julia's health to my care, how her poor heart is agitated, and how much reason we have to hate the destroyer of an union so pleasing, and once so happy.

This anxiety is still increased by the care of hiding from a passionate father, a dangerous secret, which the mother, trembling for the life of her daughter, would conceal. She has resolved to observe in his presence their former familiarity; but if maternal tenderness with pleasure takes advantage of this pretext, a daughter
filled

filled with confusion dares not yield her heart to caresses which she believes feigned, and which are the more painful, in proportion as they would be engaging, could she presume to think them real. In receiving the fond caresses of her father she looks towards her mother with an air so tender, and so humble, that she seems to say, Ah! why am I not still worthy to receive such tenderness from you!

From the frequent conversations I have had with the baroness since the unlucky discovery, I can easily find by the mildness of her reprimands, and by the tone in which she spoke of you, that Julia has endeavoured, to the utmost of her power, to calm her too just indignation, and that she has spared no pains to justify us both at her own expence. Even your letters, besides a violent passion, contain a kind of excuse which has not escaped her: she reproaches you less for abusing her confidence, than she does her own weakness for putting it in your power. She has such an esteem for you, as to believe that no other man in your place would have made a better resistance; and even attributes your faults to virtue. She now, she says, perceives the vanity of that boasted probity which does not secure a person in love, who is in other respects a worthy man, from the guilt of corrupting a virtuous girl, and without scruple dishonouring a whole family, to indulge a momentary madness.

But to what purpose do we recur to what is past? our present business is to conceal, under an everlasting vail, this odious mystery: to efface, if possible, the least vestige of it; and to second
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the goodness of heaven, which has left no visible proof of your folly. The secret is confined to six safe persons. The repose of all you have loved, the life of a mother reduced to despair, the honour of a respectable family, your own virtue, all these still depend on you, all these point out your duty: you may repair the evil you have done, you may render yourself worthy of Julia, and justify her fault by renouncing your pretensions. If I am not deceived in my opinion of your heart, nothing but the greatness of such a sacrifice can be equal to the love that renders it necessary. Relying on the sublimity of your sentiments, I have promised, in your name, every thing you ought to perform: dare to undeceive me, if I have presumed too much on your merit, or be now what you ought to be. It is necessary to sacrifice either your mistress or your love, and to shew yourself the most abject, or the most virtuous of mankind.

This unfortunate mother intended to write to you: she even began the painful task. Oh! what stabs would her bitter complaints have given you! how would her affecting reproaches have wounded your heart, and her humble intreaties penetrated you with shame! I have torn in pieces this distressful letter, which you would never have been able to support. I could not endure the preposterous sight of a mother humbling herself before the seducer of her child: you are worthy, at least, that we should not use means that would rend a heart of adamant, and drive to the extremes of despair a man of uncommon sensibility.

If this were the first effort love had demand-
ed

ed from you, I might doubt of the success, and hesitate as to the degree of esteem you deserve: but the sacrifice you have made to the honour of Julia, by quitting this country, is a pledge of that you are going to make to her repose, by putting a stop to a useless correspondence. The first efforts of virtue are always the most painful, and you will lose the advantage of that which has cost you so dear, by obstinately maintaining a vain correspondence, attended with such danger to her you love, without the least advantage to either of you; and which can only serve to prolong the torments of both. No longer doubt it; it is become absolutely necessary that this Julia, who was so dear to you, should be forgotten by the man she loved so well. In vain you dissemble your misfortunes, she was lost to you at the moment you left her; or, rather, heaven disposed of her, before she gave herself to you; for her father had promised her to another before his return, and you too well know that the promise of that inexorable man is irrevocable. In what manner soever you regulate your conduct, your desires are opposed by an inevitable fate, and you can never possess her. The only choice that remains to you, is either to plunge her into an abyss of misfortunes and reproach, or to honour what you have adored, and restore to her, instead of the happiness she has lost, at least the prudence, peace, and safety of which she has been deprived by her fatal connection with you.

How would you be afflicted, how would you be stung with remorse, could you contemplate the real state of my unhappy friend, and the
abuse-

abatement to which she is reduced by remorse and shame? How is her lustre tarnished, how languid all her gracefulness? how are all her noble and engaging sentiments unhappily absorbed in this one passion? her friendship itself is cooled: scarcely does she partake of the pleasure I feel when we meet: her sick heart is only sensible of grief and love. Alas! what is become of that fondness and sensibility, of that delicacy of taste, of that tender interest in the pains and pleasures of others? She is still, I confess, mild, generous, compassionate: the amiable habit of doing well cannot be effaced; but it is only a blind habit, a taste without reflection. Her actions are the same, but they are not performed with the same zeal; those sublime sentiments are weakened, that divine flame is extinguished, this angel is now no more than woman. Oh, what a noble mind have you seduced from virtue!

L E T T E R X C V.

To the Baronefs d'ÉTANGE.

PENETRATED with sorrow, which ought to be lasting as my life, I throw myself at your feet; not to shew a repentance that is out of my power, but to expiate an involuntary crime, by renouncing all that could render life a blessing. As no human passion ever equalled that inspired by your angelic daughter, never was there a sacrifice equal to that I am going to make to the most respectable of mothers: but Julia has too

well taught me how to sacrifice happiness to duty; she has too courageously set me the example, for me, at least, in one instance, not to imitate her. Were my blood capable of removing your distress, I would shed it in silence, and complain of being able to give you only so feeble a proof of my affection; but to break the most sweet, the most pure, the most sacred bond that ever united two hearts, is, alas! an effort which the whole universe could not oblige me to make, and which you alone could obtain.

Yes, I promise to live far from her, as long as you require it; I will abstain from seeing her, from writing to her: this I swear by your precious life, so necessary to the preservation of her's. I submit, not without horror, but without murmuring, to whatever you condescend to enjoin her and me. I will even add, that her happiness is capable of alleviating my misery, and that I shall die contented, if you give her a husband worthy of her. Oh, let him be found! and let him dare to tell me that his passion for Julia is greater than mine! In vain may he have every thing that I want; if he has not my heart, he has nothing for Julia. But I have only this honest and tender heart. Alas! I have nothing more. Love, which levels all, exalts not the person; it elevates only the sentiments. Oh, had I dared to listen to mine for you, how often, in addressing you, would my lips have pronounced the tender name of mother?

Deign to confide in oaths which shall not be vain, and in a man who is not a deceiver. If I ever dishonour your esteem, I must first dishonour myself. My unexperienced heart knew
not

not the danger, till it was too late to fly : I had not then learned of your daughter the cruel art she has since taught me, of conquering love with its own weapons. Banish your fears, I conjure you. Is there a person in the world to whom her repose, her felicity, her honour, is more dear than it is to me ? no, my word and my heart are securities for the engagement into which I now enter, as well in the name of my lovely friend, as in my own. Assure yourself that no indiscreet word shall ever pass my lips, and that I will breathe my last sigh without divulging the cause of my death. Calm therefore that affliction which consumes you, and which adds infinitely to mine ; dry up the tears that pierce my very soul ; try to recover your health ; restore to the most affectionate daughter that ever existed, the happiness she has renounced for you ; be happy ; live, that she may value life ; for, notwithstanding our misfortunes, to be the mother of Julia is still sufficient cause for happiness.

LETTER XCVI.

To Mrs ORBE.

With the preceding Letter inclosed.

THERE, cruel friend ! is my answer. When you read it, if you know my heart, you will burst into tears, unless yours has lost its sensibility ; but no longer overwhelm me with that merciless esteem which I so dearly purchase,

chase, and which serves but to increase my torment.

Has your barbarous hand then dared to break the gentle union formed under your eye, even almost from infancy, and which your friendship seemed to share with so much pleasure! I am now as wretched as you would have me, or as it is possible to be. Do you conceive all the evil you have done? are you sensible that you have torn me from my soul? that what I have lost is beyond redemption, and above recompense? and that it is better to die an hundred times, than not to live for each other? Why do you urge the happiness of Julia? can she be happy while her heart is not content? Why do you mention the danger of her mother? ah! what is the life of a mother; of mine, of yours, even of her's; what is the existence of the whole world, to the delightful sensation by which we were united? O senseless and savage virtue! I obey thy unmeaning voice; I abhor thee, while I sacrifice all to thy dictates. How unavailing are thy consolations against the distressful agonies of the soul? Go, thou sullen idol of the unhappy, thou only servest to augment their misery, by depriving them of the resources which fortune offers. Yet I obey; yes, cruel friend, I obey. I will become, if possible, as insensible and savage as yourself. I will forget every thing upon earth that was dear to me. I will no longer hear or pronounce Julia's name, or yours. I will no more recal their unsupportable remembrance. An inflexible vexation and rage shall preserve me from such misfortunes. A steady obstinacy shall supply the place of courage: I have paid
too

too dearly for my sensibility; it were better even to renounce humanity.

LETTER XCVII.

From Mrs ORBE.

THE letter you have written me is indeed extremely pathetic; but there is so much love and virtue in your conduct, that it effaces the bitterness of your complaints: you are so generous, that I have not the courage to quarrel with you; for whatever extravagances we may commit, if we are still capable of sacrificing all that is dear to us, we deserve praise rather than reproach; therefore, notwithstanding your abuse, you never was so dear to me, as since you have made me so fully sensible of your worth.

Return thanks to that virtue you believe you hate, and which does more for you than even your love. There is not one of us, not even my aunt, whom you have not gained by a sacrifice, the value of which she well knows. She could not read your letter without a flow of tenderness: she had even the weakness to shew it to her daughter; but poor Julia's endeavours, while she read it, to stifle her sighs and tears, quite overcame her, and she fainted away.

This tender mother, whom your letters had already greatly affected, begins to perceive from every circumstance, that your hearts are of a superior mould; and that they are distinguished by a natural sympathy, which neither time nor human efforts will ever be able to efface. She

who stands in such need of consolation, would herself freely console her daughter, if prudence did not restrain her; and I see her too ready to become her confident, to fear that she can be angry with me. Yesterday I heard her say, even before Julia, perhaps a little indiscreetly, "Ah! if it only depended on me!"——and though she stopt short, and said no more, I perceived, by a kiss which Julia impressed on her hand, that she too well understood her meaning. I am even certain that she was several times inclined to speak to her inflexible husband; but whether the danger of exposing her daughter to the fury of an enraged father, or whether it was fear for herself, her timidity has hitherto kept her silent; and her illness increases so fast, that I am afraid she will never be able to execute her half formed resolution.

However, notwithstanding the faults of which you are the cause, that integrity of heart, visible in your mutual affection, has given her such an opinion of you, that she confides in the promise you have both made of discontinuing your correspondence, and has not taken any precaution to have her daughter more closely watched: indeed, if Julia makes an ill return to her confidence, she will no longer be worthy of her affection. You would both deserve the severest treatment, if you were capable of deceiving the best of mothers, and of abusing the esteem she has for you.

I shall not endeavour to revive in your mind the hopes which I myself do not entertain; but I would shew you, that the most honest is also the wisest part, and that if you have any resource
left,

left, it is in the sacrifice which reason and honour lay you under. Mother, relations, friends, are now all for you, except the father, who will by this method be gained over, if any thing can do it. Whatever imprecations you may utter in the moment of despair, you have a hundred times proved to us, that there is no path more sure of leading to happiness than that of virtue. Therefore resume your courage, and be a man! be again yourself. If I am at all acquainted with your heart, the most cruel manner of losing Julia, would be by rendering yourself unworthy of her.

LETTER XCVIII.

From JULIA.

SHE is no more! my eyes have seen her's closed for ever; my lips have received her last sigh; my name was the last word she pronounced; her last look was fixed on me. No, it was not life she seemed to quit; too little had I known how to render that valuable! From me alone she was torn. She saw me without a guide, and void of hope, overwhelmed by my misfortunes and my crime: to her, death was nothing; she grieved only to leave her daughter in such a state of misery. Alas! she had but too much reason. What had she to regret on earth? what could there be here below, in her eye, worth the immortal reward of patience and of virtue reserved for her in a better world? what had she to do on earth, but to weep for my disgrace?

grace? Oh! most incomparable woman! thou now dwellest in the abode of glory and felicity! thou livest; whilst I, given up to repentance and despair, deprived for ever of thy care, thy counsel, thy sweet caresses, am dead to happiness, to peace, to innocence! Nothing do I feel but the loss of thee; nothing do I behold but my own reproach: my life is only pain and grief. Oh my dear, my tender mother! alas, I am more dead than thou art!

Good God! to whom do I shed these tears, and vent these sighs? The cruel man who caused them, I make my confidant! With him, who has rendered my life unhappy, I dare to deplore my unhappiness! Yes, yes, barbarous as you are, share the torments you have made me suffer. You, for whom I have plunged the dagger into a mother's bosom, tremble at the misfortunes you have occasioned, and shudder with me at the horrid act you have committed. To what eyes dare I presume to appear as despicable as I really am? before whom shall I degrade myself to the bent of my remorse? to whom, but to the accomplice of my crime, can I sufficiently make it known? It is my insupportable punishment, to have no accuser but my own heart, and to see attributed to the goodness of my disposition the impure tears that flow from a bitter repentance. I saw, I trembling saw, the poisonous sorrow put a period to the life of my unhappy mother. In vain did her pity for me prevent her confessing it; in vain she affected to attribute the progress of her illness to the cause by which it was produced; in vain was my cousin induced to talk in the same strain.

strain. Nothing could deceive a heart torn with regret; and, to my lasting torment, I shall carry to my tomb the frightful idea of having shortened her life, to whom I am indebted for my own.

O thou, whom heaven in its anger raised up to render me guilty and unhappy, for the last time receive into thy bosom the tears thou hast occasioned! I come not, as formerly, to share with thee the grief that ought to be mutual. These are the sighs of a last adieu, which escape from me in spite of myself. It is done: the empire of love is subdued in a soul condemned wholly to despair. I will consecrate the rest of my days to lamentation for the best of mothers. To her I will sacrifice that passion which was the cause of her death; happy shall I be, if the painful conquest be sufficient to expiate my guilt! Oh, if her immortal mind penetrates into the bottom of my heart, she will know that the sacrifice I make is not entirely unworthy of her! Share with me then an effort which you have rendered necessary. If you retain any respect for the memory of an union once so dear and fatal, by that I conjure you to fly from me for ever; no more to write to me; no more to aggravate my remorse; but suffer me to forget, if possible, our former connection. May my eyes never behold you more! may I never more hear your name pronounced! may the remembrance of you never more agitate my mind! I dare still intreat, in the name of that love which ought never to have existed, that to so many causes of grief you add not that of seeing my last request despised. Adieu then for the last time; dear
and

130 J U L I A; or,
and only—Ah, fool that I am—adieu for
ever!

L E T T E R X C I X.

To Mrs ORBE.

AT last the vail is rent; the long illusion is vanished; all my flattering hopes are extinguished; nothing is left to feed the eternal flame, but a bitter, yet pleasing remembrance, which supports my life, and nourishes my torments with the vain recollection of a happiness that is now no more.

Is it then true, that I have tasted supreme felicity? Am I the same being that was once so happy? Could any one be susceptible of such torments, who was not doomed to eternal misery? Can he who has enjoyed the blessings I have lost, be deprived of them, and still exist? and can such contrary sensations affect the same mind? O ye glorious and happy days, surely ye were immortal! ye were too celestial ever to perish! your whole duration was one continued ecstasy, by which ye were converged like eternity into a single point. I knew neither of past nor future, and I tasted at once the delights of a thousand ages. Alas! ye are vanished like a shadow! that eternity of happiness was but an instant of my life. Time now resumes his tardy pace, and slowly measures the sad remains of my existence.

To render my distress still more insupportable,
my increasing affliction is cruelly aggravated by
the

the loss of all that was dear to me. It is possible, Madam, that you have still some regard for me: but you are busied by other cares, and employed in other duties. These my complaints, to which you once listened with concern, are now indiscreet. Julia! Julia herself discourages and abandons me. Gloomy remorse has banished love for ever. All is changed with respect to me; except the steadfastness of my own heart, which serves but to render my fate still more dreadful.

But, to what purpose is it to say what I am, and what I ought to be? Julia suffers! is it a time to think of myself? her sorrow renders mine more bitter. Yes, I had rather she would cease to love me, and that she were happy—Cease to love me!—can she hope it?—never, never! She has indeed forbid me to see or write to her. Alas! she removes the comforter, but never can the torment! Should the loss of a tender mother deprive her of a still more tender friend? does she think to alleviate her griefs by multiplying her misfortunes? O love! can nature be revenged only at thy expence?

No, no; in vain she pretends to forget me. Can her tender heart separate itself from mine? do I not retain it in spite of herself? are sensations like those we have experienced, to be forgotten, and can they be remembered without being again felt? Triumphant love was the bane of her felicity; and love conquered will only render her the more deserving of pity. Her days will pass in sorrow, tormented at once by vain regret and vain desires, without ever being
able

able to fulfil the obligations either of love or virtue.

Imagine not, however, that in complaining of her errors, I cease to respect them. After so many sacrifices, it is too late for me to begin to disobey. Since she commands, it is sufficient; she shall hear of me no more. Say, is my fate now sufficiently dreadful? Yet to renounce my Julia, is not the chief cause of my despair: the keenest pangs I feel are for her misfortunes, which render me infinitely more miserable than do my own. You, whom she loves above all the world, and who, next to me, are best acquainted with her worth; you, my amiable friend, are the only blessing she has left: a blessing so precious, as to render the loss of all the rest supportable. Be you her recompense for the comforts of which she is deprived, and for those also which she rejects: let a sacred friendship supply at once the tenderness of a parent and a lover, by administering every consolation that may contribute to her happiness. O let her be happy, if she can be so, how great forever the purchase! may she soon recover the peace of mind of which I, alas! have robbed her! I shall then be less sensible of the torment to which I am condemned. Since in my own eyes I am nothing, since it is my fate to pass my life in dying for her, let her regard me as already dead; I am satisfied, if this idea will add to her tranquillity. Heaven grant, that by your kindness she may be restored to her former excellence, and her former happiness.

Unhappy daughter! alas, thy mother is no more! this is a loss that cannot be repaired,
and

and for which, so long as she reproaches herself, she can never be consoled. Her troubled conscience requires of her this dear and tender mother; and thus the most dreadful remorse is added to her affliction. O Julia! oughtest thou to feel these terrible sensations? thou, who wert a witness of the sickness and of the last moments of that unfortunate parent! I intreat, I conjure you to tell me, what I ought to believe. If I am guilty, tear my heart in pieces: if our crimes brought her down to the grave, we are two monsters unworthy of existence, and it were a double crime to think of so fatal an union: O, it were even a crime to live! But, no; I am satisfied so pure a flame could never produce such baleful effects. Surely the sentiments of love are too noble. Can heaven be unjust? and could she, who sacrificed her happiness to the author of her life, ever deserve to be the cause of her death?

LETTER C.

The ANSWER.

HOW can I cease to love you, when my esteem for you increases every day? how can I stifle my affection, whilst you are growing every day more worthy of it? No, my dear, my excellent friend; what we were to each other in early life, we shall continue to be for ever; and if our mutual attachment no longer increases, it is because it cannot be increased. All the difference is, that I then loved you as

my brother, and that now I love you as my son; for though we are both younger than you, and were even your scholars, I now in some measure consider you as ours. In teaching us to think, you have learnt of us sensibility; and whatever your English philosopher may say, this education is more valuable than the other: if it is reason that constitutes the man, it is sensibility that conducts him.

Would you know why I have changed my conduct towards you? it is not, believe me, because my heart is not still the same; but because your situation is changed. I favoured your passion, while there remained one ray of hope; but since, by obstinately aspiring to Julia, you can only make her unhappy, it would be injuring you to flatter your expectations. I had even rather increase your discontent, and thus render you less deserving of my compassion. When the happiness of both becomes impossible, all that is left for a hopeless lover, is to sacrifice his own to that of the object beloved.

This, my generous friend, you have performed in the most painful sacrifice that ever was made; but, by renouncing Julia, you will purchase her repose, though at the expence of your own.

I dare scarce repeat to you the ideas that occur to me on this subject; but they are fraught with consolation, and that emboldens me. In the first place, I believe, that true love, as well as virtue, has this advantage, that it is rewarded by every sacrifice we make to it, and that we in some measure enjoy the privations we impose on ourselves, in the very idea of what they cost

us,

us, and of the motives by which we were induced. You will be sensible that your love for Julia was in proportion to her merit; and that will increase your happiness. The exquisite self-love, which knows how to reap advantage from painful virtue, will mingle its charm with that of love. You will say to yourself, I know how to love, with a pleasure more durable and more delicate than even possession itself would have afforded. The latter wears out the passion by constant enjoyment; but the other lasts for ever; and you will still enjoy it, even when you love no more.

Besides, if what Julia and you have so often told me be true, that love is the most delightful sensation that can enter into the human heart, every thing that prolongs and fixes it, even at the expence of a thousand vexations, is still a blessing. If love is a desire, that is increased by obstacles, as you still say, it ought never to be satisfied; it is better to preserve it at any rate, than that it should be extinguished in pleasure. Your passion, I confess, has stood the proof of possession, of time, of absence, and of dangers of every kind; it has conquered every obstacle, except the most powerful of all, that of having nothing more to conquer, and of feeding only on itself. The world has never seen the passion stand this proof; what right have you then to hope, that yours would have stood the test? Time might have joined to the disgust of a long possession, the progress of age and the decline of beauty; whereas, by your separation, it seems fixed in your favour: you will be always to each other in the bloom of your years; you will in-

cessantly see her, as she was when you beheld her at parting; and your hearts, united even to the grave, will prolong, by a charming illusion, your youth and your love.

If you had never been happy, an unfurmountable inquietude might have tormented you; your heart might have panted after a felicity of which it was not unworthy; your warm imagination would have incessantly required that which you might not have obtained. But love has no delights which you have not tasted; and, in your own style, you have exhausted in one year the pleasures of a whole life. Remember the passionate letter you wrote after a certain rash interview. I read it with an emotion I had never before experienced; it had no traces of the permanent state of a truly tender heart, but was filled with the last delirium of a mind inflamed with passion, and intoxicated with pleasure. You yourself may judge that such transports are not to be twice experienced in this life, and that death ought immediately to succeed. This, my friend, was the summit of all; and whatever love or fortune might have done for you, your passion and your felicity must have declined. That instant was also the beginning of your disgrace, and Julia was taken from you, at the moment when she could inspire no new sensations, as if fate intended to secure your passion from being exhausted, and to leave, in the remembrance of your past pleasures, a pleasure more sweet than all those you could now have enjoyed.

Comfort yourself then with the loss of a blessing that would certainly have escaped you, and
would

would besides have deprived you of that you now possess. Happiness and love would have vanished at once; you have at least preserved that passion, and we are not without pleasure while we continue to love. The idea of extinguished love is more terrifying to a tender heart, than that of an unhappy flame; and to feel a disgust for what we possess, is an hundred times worse than a regret for what is lost.

If the self-reproaches vented by my afflicted cousin, on the death of her mother, were well founded, the cruel remembrance would, I confess, poison that of your love, which ought for ever to be destroyed by so fatal an idea: but give no credit to her grief; it deceives her; or rather the cause to which she would ascribe her sorrow, is only a pretence to justify its excess. Her tender mind is always in fear that her affliction is not sufficiently severe, and she feels a kind of pleasure in adding bitterness to her distress: but she certainly imposes on herself; she cannot be sincere.

Ah! if she really believed she had shortened her mother's life, do you think she could support the dreadful remorse with which she would be seized? No, no, my friend, she would not then weep, she would have sunk with her into the grave. The baroness d'Etange's disease is well known; it was a dropsy of the pericardium, which was incurable; and her life was despaired of, even before she had discovered your correspondence. I own it afflicted her much, but she had great consolation. How comfortable was it to that tender mother to see, while she lamented the fault of her daughter, by how ma-

ny virtues it was counterbalanced, and to be forced to admire the dignity of her soul, while she lamented the weakness of nature? how pleasing to perceive with what affection she loved her? such indefatigable zeal! such continual solicitude! such grief at having offended her! what regret, what tears, what affecting caresses, what unwearied sensibility! In the eyes of the daughter were visible all the mother's sufferings; it was she who served her in the day, and watched her by night; it was from her hand that she received every assistance: you would have thought her some other Julia; for her natural delicacy disappeared, she was strong and robust, the most painful services caused no fatigue, and the intrepidity of her soul seemed to have created her a new body. She did every thing, yet appeared to be unemployed; she was every-where, and yet rarely left her; she was perpetually on her knees by the bed, with her lips pressed to her mother's hand, bewailing her illness and her own misfortunes, and confounding these two sensations in order to increase her affliction. I never saw any person enter my aunt's chamber, during the last days, without being moved even to tears at this most affecting spectacle, to behold two hearts more closely uniting, at the very moment when they were to be torn asunder. It was visible that their only cause of anguish was their separation; and that to live or die would have been indifferent to either, could they have remained or departed together.

Far from adopting Julia's gloomy ideas, assure yourself that every thing that could be hoped for from human assistance and consolation, have on her

her part concurred to retard the progress of her mother's disease; and that her tenderness and care have undoubtedly preserved her longer with us, than she would otherwise have continued. My aunt herself has told me a hundred times, that her last days were the sweetest of her life, and that the happiness of her daughter was the only thing wanting to complete her own.

If grief must be supposed in any degree to have hastened her dissolution, it certainly sprang from another source. It is to her husband it ought to be ascribed. Being naturally inconstant, he lavished the fire of his youth on a thousand objects infinitely less pleasing than his virtuous wife; and when age brought him back to her, he treated her with that inflexible severity with which faithless husbands are accustomed to aggravate their faults. My poor cousin has felt the effects of it. An high opinion of his nobility, and that roughness of disposition which nothing can ever soften, have produced your misfortunes and her's. Her mother, who had always a regard for you, and who discovered Julia's love when it was too violent to be extinguished, had long secretly bemoaned the misfortune of not being able to conquer either the inclinations of her daughter, or the obstinacy of her husband, and of being the first cause of an evil which she could not remedy. When your letters unexpectedly fell into her hands, and she found how far you had misused her confidence, she was afraid of losing all by endeavouring to save all, and to hazard the life of her child in attempting to restore her honour. She founded her husband several times without success.

success. She often resolved to venture an entire confidence in him, and to shew him the full extent of his duty; but she was always restrained by her timidity. She hesitated while it was in her power; and when she would have told him, she was no longer able to speak; her strength failed her, she carried the fatal secret with her to the grave; and I know the austere disposition of the man, without having the least idea how far it may be tempered by natural affection, am satisfied, since Julia's life is in no danger.

All this she knows. But you will ask, what I think of her apparent remorse? in answer to which I must tell you, that love is more ingenuous than she. Overcome with grief for the loss of her mother, she would willingly forget you; and, in spite of herself, Love disturbs her conscience in order to bring you to her memory. He chuses that her tears should be connected with the object of her passion; but she not daring to employ her thoughts directly on you, he deceives her into it under the mask of repentance: thus he imposes on her with so much art, that she is willing to increase her woes rather than banish you from her thoughts. Your heart may perhaps be ignorant of such subterfuges, but they are not the less natural; for though your passion may be equal in degree, its nature is very different. Yours is warm and violent, her's soft and tender; your sensations are breathed forth with vehemence, but her's retort upon herself, and pierce her very inmost soul. Love animates and supports your heart, whilst her's is oppressed and dejected with its weight;

weight; all its springs are relaxed, her strength is gone, her courage is extinguished, and her virtue has lost its power. Her heroic faculties are not however annihilated, but suspended: a momentary crisis may restore them to their full vigour, or totally destroy their existence. One step farther in this gloomy path and she is lost; but if her incomparable soul should recover itself, she will be greater, more heroic, more virtuous than ever, and there will be no danger of a relapse. Learn then in this perilous situation to revere the object of your love. Any thing that should come from you, though it were against yourself, would at this time infallibly prove mortal. If you are determined to persist, your triumph will be certain; but think not you will ever possess the self-same Julia.

LETTER CI.

From Lord B——.

I HAD some pretensions to your friendship, you were become serviceable to me, and I was prepared to meet you. But what are my pretensions, my necessities, or my eagerness, to you? I am forgotten, you do not even deign to write to me. I am not ignorant of your solitude, nor a stranger to your secret design; you are weary of existence. Die then, weak youth; yes die, thou daring, yet cowardly mortal; but in thy last moments, remember that thou hast stung the soul of thy sincere friend with the reflection of having served an ungrateful man.

L E T-

L E T T E R CII.

The ANSWER.

COME, my kind friend. I was determined to taste no more pleasure upon earth, but we will meet once more. You are wrong; it is as impossible that you should meet with ingratitude, as that I should ever be ungrateful.

B I L L E T.

From JULIA.

IT is time to renounce the errors of youth, and to abandon a deceitful hope. I can never be yours. Restore to me that liberty of which my father chuses to dispose; or fill up the measure of my woes by a refusal which will ruin me for ever, without producing any advantage to yourself.

Julia Etange.

L E T T E R CIII.

*From the Baron d'ÉTANGE.**In which the preceding Billet was inclosed.*

IF there remains in the mind of a seducer the least sentiment of honour or humanity, answer

swer the billet of an unhappy girl, whose heart you have corrupted, and who should no longer exist, if I could suppose her to have carried the forgetfulness of herself any farther. I should not indeed be much surprised if the same philosophy which taught her to catch at the first man she saw, should also instruct her to disobey her father. Think of this matter. I always chuse to proceed with lenity and decency, when these methods are likely to succeed; but because I act thus with you, you are not to suppose me ignorant in what manner a gentleman should take revenge of those beneath him.

LETTER CIV.

THE ANSWER.

SPARE, Sir, those vain menaces, and that unjust reproach, which can neither terrify nor humble me. Between two persons of the same age there can be no *seducer* but love, and you can have no right to vilify a man whom your daughter honoured with her esteem.

What concessions do you expect, and from what authority are they demanded? Is it to the author of all my misfortunes that I must sacrifice my remaining glimpse of hope! I will respect the father of Julia; but let him deign to be mine if he expects obedience. No, Sir, what opinion soever you may entertain of your proceedings, they will not oblige me, for your sake, to relinquish such valuable and just pretensions. As you are the sole cause of my misery,
I owe

I owe you nothing but hatred; your pretensions are without foundation. But Julia commands: her I shall never disobey; therefore you have my consent. Another may possess her, but I shall be more worthy.

If your daughter had deigned to consult me concerning the limits of your authority, doubt not but I would have taught her to disregard your unjust pretensions. How despotic soever may be the empire you assume, my rights are infinitely more sacred. The chain by which we are united marks the extent of paternal dominion, even in the eye of human tribunals; and whilst you appeal to the right of nature, you yourself are trampling upon its laws.

Cease to alledge that delicate phantom honour, which you seem so determined to vindicate; for here again you are the sole offender. Respect Julia's choice, and your honour is secure; for I honour you in my heart, regardless of your insults. Notwithstanding all your gothic maxims, one honest man was never dishonoured by his alliance with another. If my presumption offends you, attempt my life; against you I shall never defend it. As to the rest, I am little anxious to know in what consists the honour of a gentleman; but with regard to that of an honest man, I own it concerns me, and therefore I shall defend and preserve it pure and spotless to the end of my life.

Go, inhuman father, and meditate the destruction of your only child; whilst she, full of duty and affection, stands ready to yield her happiness a victim to prejudice and opinion: but be assured your own remorse will one day
severely

severely revenge my injuries, and you will then perceive, when it is too late, that your blind and unnatural hatred was no more fatal to me than to yourself. That I shall be wretched, is most certain: but if ever the just feelings of nature should emerge from the bottom of your heart, how infinitely greater will be your unhappiness in having sacrificed the only daughter of your bosom to a mere phantom: a daughter who has no equal in beauty, merit, or virtue, and on whom indulgent heaven has bestowed every blessing except a kind father.

B I L L E T.

Inclosed in the foregoing.

I RESTORE to Julia Etange the power to dispose of herself, and to give her hand without consulting her heart.

S. G.

L E T T E R C V.

From JULIA.

I INTENDED giving you a description of the scene which produced the billet you have received; but my father took his measures so artfully, that it ended only the instant before the post went out. His letter as certainly saved the mail as this will be too late; so that your resolution

lution will be taken, and your answer dispatched, before it can possibly reach you; therefore, all detail would now be useless. I have done my duty; you will do yours: but fate will overwhelm us, and we are betrayed by honour. We are divided for ever! and to increase my horror, I am going to be forced into the arms of—O heavens! it was once in my power to live in thine. Just God!—we must tremble and be silent.

The pen falls from my hand. I have been of late much indisposed. This morning's affair has agitated me prodigiously—Oh, my head, my poor heart? I feel, I feel, I shall faint—Will heaven have no mercy on my sufferings?—I can no longer support myself—I must retire to my bed, and will console myself in the hope of rising no more. Adieu, my only love! adieu, for the last time, my dear, my tender friend! Ah! I live no longer for thee! have I not then already ceased to live?

L E T T E R C V I.

From JULIA to Mrs ORBE.

IS it then true, my dear, my cruel friend, that you have called me back to life and wretchedness? I saw the happy instant when I was going to be again united to the tenderest of mothers; but your inhuman kindness has condemned me to bemoan her yet longer: when my desire to follow her had almost snatched me from this earth, my unwillingness to leave you behind
held

held me fast. If I am at all reconciled to life, it is from the comfort of not having entirely escaped the hand of death. Thank heaven! that beauty is no more for which my heart has paid so dearly. The distemper from which I am recovered has happily deprived me of it. This fortunate loss, I hope, will abate the gross ardour of a man so indelicate as to dare to marry me without my consent. Not finding any longer the only thing which he admired, he will surely be little anxious about the rest. Without breach of promise to my father, without injuring that friend whose life is in his power, I shall be able to repulse this importunate wretch: my lips will be silent, but my looks will speak for me. His disgust will defend me against his tyranny, and he will find me too disagreeable to dare to make me unhappy.

Ah, my dear cousin! you know a constant tender heart that would not be so repulsed. His passion was not confined to outward form or charms of person; it was me that he loved, and not my face; we were united in every part of our being; and so long as Julia had remained, her beauty might have fled, but love would for ever have continued. And yet he could consent——ungrateful youth!——yet it was but just, since I could ask it. Who would wish to retain by promise those who could withdraw their heart? and did I attempt to withdraw mine?——have I done it?——O heavens! why must every thing conspire to remind me of times that are no more, and to increase a flame which ought to be extinguished? In vain do I endeavour to tear the dear image from my heart: it is

too firmly attached; that heart itself would first be torn in pieces, and all my endeavours only serve to engrave it deeper there.

May I venture to tell you a vision of my delirium during my fever, which has continued to torment me ever since my recovery? Yes, know and pity the distraction of your unhappy friend, that you may thank heaven for preserving your heart from the horrid passion by which it is occasioned. During the most violent moment of my phrenzy, when my fever was at the height, I thought I beheld the unhappy youth kneeling by my bed-side: not such as when he charmed my senses during the short period of my felicity; but pale, wild, and lost in despair. He took my hand, not disgusted with its appearance, and without fear of the terrible infection, eagerly kissed it, and bathed it with his tears. At the sight of him, I felt that pleasing emotion which his unexpected appearance used formerly to occasion. I endeavoured to dart towards him, but was restrained. You tore him from me; and what affected me most was his sighs and groans, which seemed to increase as he went farther from me.

It is impossible to describe the effect of this strange dream. My fever was long and violent; I continued many days insensible; I have seen him often in my phrenzy; but none of my dreams have left half the impression on my memory which this last did: it is impossible to drive it from my imagination. Methinks I see him every moment in that attitude. His air, his dress, his manner, his sorrowful and tender look, are continually before my eyes. His lips
seem

seem still to press my hand; I feel it wet with his tears. His plaintive voice melts my heart; now I behold him dragged far from me, whilst I endeavour in vain to hold him fast. In short, the whole imaginary scene appears in my mind as real as if it had actually passed.

I hesitated long before I could resolve to tell you this. Shame hindered me from discovering it when we were together; but my agitation, far from subsiding, grows every day stronger, and I am able no longer to conceal my folly. Would that I were entirely a fool! why should I wish to preserve the remains of that reason which serves only to torment me.

But to return to my dream. Rally me, my dear friend, if you will, for my simplicity; but surely there is something mysterious in this vision, which distinguishes it from common phrenzy. Can it be a presage of his death? or is he already dead? and was it thus that heaven deigned for once to be my guide, and invite me to follow him whom I was ordained to love? Alas! a summons to the grave would to me be the best of blessings.

In vain do I recal to my aid those empty maxims of philosophy which amuse only those who have no feelings? they impose on me no longer, and I cannot help despising them. I believe that spirits are invisible; but is it impossible that, between two lovers so closely united, there should be an immediate communication, independent of the body and the senses? may not their mutual impressions be transmitted through the brain? — Poor Julia! what extravagances are these! How credulous do our passions render

us! and how difficult it is for a heart severely affected to relinquish its errors, even after it perceives them.

L E T T E R CVII.

The A N S W E R.

A H, unfortunate and tender girl! have you been born only to suffer? I try in vain to keep you from sorrow; but you seem to court it; and your evil genius is more powerful than all my endeavours. Do not however add chimerical apprehensions to so many real causes of inquietude: and since my caution has been more prejudicial than serviceable to you, let me free you from a mistake which aggravates your misery; perhaps the melancholy truth will be less tormenting. Know then that your dream was not a dream; that it was not the phantom of your friend which you beheld, but his real person; and that the affecting scene, which is ever present to your imagination, did actually pass in your room on the day after your disorder was at the crisis.

On the preceding day I left you very late; and Mr Orbe, who would take me from you that night, was ready to depart; when on a sudden we perceived that unhappy wretch, whose condition is truly deplorable, enter hastily, and throw himself at our feet. He took post horses immediately on the receipt of your last letter. By travelling day and night he performed the journey in three days, and never stopped till the last stage; where he waited in order to enter the
town

town under favour of the night. I am ashamed to confess, that I was less eager than Mr Orbe to embrace him: for without knowing the intent of his journey, I foresaw the consequence. The bitter recollection of former times, your danger and his, his manifest discomposure of mind, all contributed to check so agreeable a surprise; and I was too powerfully affected to salute him with eagerness. I nevertheless embraced him with a heart-felt emotion in which he sympathised, and which reciprocally displayed itself in a kind of silent grief, more eloquent than tears and lamentations. The first words he uttered were ——— “How does she? O, how is my Julia? “am I to live or die?” I concluded from thence, that he was informed of your illness; and imagining that he was likewise acquainted with the nature of it, I spoke without any other precaution than that of extenuating the danger. When he understood that it was the small pox, he made dreadful lamentation, and was taken suddenly ill. Fatigue and the want of sleep, together with perturbation of mind, had so entirely overcome him, that it was some time before we could bring him to himself. He had scarce strength to speak; we therefore persuaded him to go to rest.

Nature being quite spent, he slept twelve hours successively; but with so much agitation, that such a sleep must rather impair than recruit his strength. The next day gave birth to new perplexity: he was absolutely determined to see you. I represented to him the danger there was that his presence might occasion some fatal revolution in your distemper. He proposed to
wait

wait till there was no risque; but his stay itself was a terrible risque, of which I endeavoured to make him sensible. He rudely interrupted me. "Cease, (said he with a tone of indignation,) your cruel eloquence: it is too much to exert it for my ruin. Do not hope to drive me from hence as you did when I was forced into exile. I would travel a hundred times from the farthest extremity of the world for a single glance of my Julia: but I swear (added he with vehemence,) by the Author of my being, that I will not stir till I have seen her. We will try for once, whether I shall move you with compassion, or you make me guilty of perjury."

His resolution was fixed. Mr Orbe was of opinion that we should contrive some means to gratify him, that we might send him away before his return was discovered: for he was only known to one person in the house, of whose secrecy I was assured; and we called him by a feigned name before the family *. I promised him that he should see you the next night, upon condition that he staid but a minute, that he did not utter a syllable, and that he departed the next morning before break of day. To these conditions, I exacted his solemn promise; then I was easy, I left my husband with him, and returned to you.

I found you much better; the eruption was quite complete; and the physician raised my courage, by giving me hopes. I laid my plan beforehand with Bab; and your fever, though a little abated, leaving you still somewhat light-headed,

* We find afterwards, that this feigned name was St Preux.

headed, I took that opportunity to dismiss every body, and send my husband word to introduce his guest, concluding, that before the paroxysm of your disorder was over, you would be less likely to recollect him. We had all the difficulty in the world to get rid of your disconsolate father, who was determined to sit up with you every night. At length I told him with some warmth, that he would spare nobody the trouble of watching, for that I was determined likewise to sit up with you; and that he might be assured, though he was your father, his tenderness for you was not greater than mine. He departed with reluctance, and we remained by ourselves. Mr Orbe came about eleven, and told me that he had left your friend in the street. I went in search of him: I took him by the hand: he trembled like a leaf. As he went through the anti-chamber, his strength failed him: he drew his breath with difficulty, and was forced to sit down.

At length having singled out some objects by the faint glimmering of a distant light——Yes, said he, with a deep sigh, I recollect these apartments. Once in my life I traversed them——about the same hour——with the same mysterious caution——I trembled as I do now——My heart fluttered with the same emotion——O! rash creature that I was——though but a poor mortal, I nevertheless dared to taste——What am I now going to behold in that same spot, where every thing diffused a delight with which my soul was intoxicated? what am I going to view, in that same object which inspired and shared my transports?——the retinue of
me-

melancholy, the image of death, afflicted virtue, and expiring beauty!

Dear cousin, I will spare your tender heart the dismal detail of such an affecting scene. He saw you, and was mute. He had promised to be silent;—but such a silence! he fell upon his knees; he sobbed, and kissed the curtains of your bed; he lifted up his hands and eyes; he fetched deep and silent groans; he could scarce stifle his grief and lamentations. Without seeing him, you accidentally put one of your hands out of bed; he seized it with extravagant eagerness; the ardent kisses he impressed on your sick hand, awaked you sooner than all the noise and murmur which buzzed about you. I perceived that you recollected him, and in spite of all his resistance and complaints, I forced him from your chamber directly, hoping to elude the impression of such a fleeting apparition, under the pretence of its being the effect of your delirium. But finding that you took no notice of it, I concluded that you had forgot it. I forbade Bab to mention it, and I am persuaded she has kept her word. A needless caution, which love has disconcerted, and which has only served to aggravate the pain of a recollection which it is too late to efface.

He departed as he had promised, and I made him swear not to stop in the neighbourhood. But, my dear girl, this is not all; I must acquaint you with another circumstance, of which likewise you cannot long remain ignorant. Lord B—— passed by two days afterwards; he hastened to overtake him; he joined him at Dijon, and found him ill. The unlucky wretch had
caught

caught the small-pox. He concealed from me that he had never had the distemper, and I introduced him without precaution. As he could not cure your disorder, he was determined to partake of it. When I recollect the eagerness with which he kissed your hand, I make no doubt but he underwent inoculation purposely. It is impossible to have been worse prepared to receive it; but it was the inoculation of love, and it proved fortunate. The Author of life preserved the most tender lover that ever existed; he is recovered, and according to my Lord's last letter, they are by this time actually set out for Paris.

You see, my too lovely cousin, that you ought to banish those melancholy terrors which alarm you without reason. You have long since renounced the person of your friend, and you find that his life is safe. Think of nothing therefore, but how to preserve yours, and how to make the promised sacrifice to paternal affection with becoming grace. Cease to be the sport of vain hope, and to feed yourself with chimeras. You are in great haste to be proud of your deformity: be more humble; for, believe me, you have yet too much reason to be so. You have undergone a cruel infection, but it has spared your face. What you take for seams, is nothing but a redness which will soon wear off. I was worse affected than you, and yet you see I am tolerable. My angel, you will still be beautiful in spite of yourself: and do you think that the enamoured Wolmar, who, in three years absence, could not conquer a passion conceived in eight days, is likely to be cured of it, when he has an opportunity.

portunity of seeing you every hour? Oh! how desperate is your condition, if your only resource is the hope of being disagreeable!

L E T T E R CVIII.

From JULIA.

IT is too much; it is too much. O my friend, you have overcome. I am not proof against such powerful love; my resolution is exhausted. My conscience affords me the consolatory testimony, that I have exerted my utmost efforts. Heaven, I hope, will not call me to account for more than it has bestowed upon me. This sorrowful heart, which cost you so dear, and which you have more than purchased, is yours without reserve: it was attached to you the first moment my eyes beheld you: it will remain yours to my dying breath. You have too much deserved it, ever to be in danger of losing it; and I am weary of being the slave of a chimerical virtue at the expence of justice.

Yes, my most tender and generous lover, your Julia will be ever yours, will ever love you: I must, I will, I ought. I resign to you the empire which love has given you; nothing shall ever deprive you of it more. The deceitful voice which murmurs at the bottom of my soul, whispers in vain: it shall no longer betray me. What are the vain duties it prescribes, in opposition to a passion which heaven itself inspired; is not the obligation which binds me to you, the most solemn of all? is it not to you alone

lone that I have given an absolute promise? was it not the first vow of my heart, never to forget you? and is not your inviolable attachment a fresh tie to secure the constancy of mine? In the transports of love with which I once more surrender my heart to thee, my only regret is, that I have struggled against sentiments so agreeable and so natural. Nature, O gentle nature, resume thy rights! I abjure the savage virtues which conspire to thy destruction. Can the inclinations which thou hast inspired be more seductive than a specious reason by which I have been so oft misguided?

Have some regard, my amiable friend, for the tenderness of my inclinations; you are too much indebted to them to abhor them: but allow of a participation which nature and affection demands; let not the rights of blood and friendship be totally extinguished by those of love. Do not imagine, that to follow you I will ever quit my father's house. Hope not that I will refuse to comply with the obligations imposed on me by parental authority. The cruel loss of one of the authors of my being has too well taught me to dread causing any affliction to the other. No; she from whom he expects all his future comfort, will not increase the anguish of his soul, already too much oppressed. I will not destroy all that gave me life. No, no, I am sensible of my crime, but cannot abhor it. Duty, honour, virtue, all these considerations have lost their influence; but yet I am not a monster; I am frail, but not unnatural. I am determined, I will not grieve any of the objects of my affection. Let a father, te-

nacious of his word, and jealous of a vain prerogative, dispose of my hand where he has promised it; but let love alone dispose of my heart; let my tears incessantly trickle down the bosom of my tenderest friend. Let me be lost and wretched; but, if possible, let every one dear to me be happy and contented. On you three my existence depends; and may your felicity make me forget the misery and despair to which I am doomed.

L E T T E R C I X.

The A N S W E R.

WE revive, my Julia; all the real sentiments of our souls resume their wonted course. Nature has preserved our existence, and love has restored us to life. Did you suppose, could you be rash enough to imagine, you could withdraw your affections from me? I am better acquainted with your heart than yourself, that heart which heaven destined to be mine! I find they are united by one common thread, which death alone can divide. Is it in our power to separate them, or ought we even to attempt it? Are they joined together by ties which man hath formed, and which man can dissolve? No, no, my Julia! if cruel destiny bars our claim to tender conjugal titles, yet nothing can deprive us of the character of faithful lovers; that shall be the comfort of our melancholy days, and we will carry it with us to the grave.

Thus we recover life only to renew our suffer-

ferings, and the consciousness of existence is to us nothing more than a sense of affliction. Unfortunate beings! how are we altered? how have we ceased to be what we once were? where is that enchantment of supreme felicity? where are those exquisite raptures which enlivened our passion? Nothing is left of us but our love; love alone remains, and all its charms are eclipsed. O, thou dear and too dutiful girl, thou fond fair one without resolution! all our misfortunes are derived from thy errors. Alas! a heart of less purity would not have so fatally misled thee! yes, the honour of thy heart has been our ruin; the upright sentiments which fill thy breast have banished discretion. You would endeavour to reconcile filial tenderness with unconquerable love; by attempting to gratify all your inclinations, you confound instead of conciliating them, and become culpable even through virtue. O Julia, how inconceivable is your power! by what strange magic do you fascinate my reason! even while you endeavour to make me blush at our passion, you have the art to appear amiable in your very failings. You force me to admire you, even while I partake of your remorse ——— your remorse! ——— does it become you to feel remorse? ——— you, whom I loved ——— you, whom I shall never cease to adore ——— can guilt ever approach your spotless heart? ——— O cruel Julia! if you mean to restore the heart which belongs to me alone, return it to me such as it was when you first bestowed it.

What do you tell me? ——— will you venture to intimate ——— you, fall into the arms of another? —

ther?—shall another possess you?—will you be no longer mine?—or, to complete my horror, will you not be solely mine?—I—shall I suffer such dreadful punishment?—shall I see you survive yourself?—No, I had rather lose you entirely, than share you with another.—Why has not heaven armed me with courage equal to the rage which distracts me?—Sooner than *thy* hand should debase itself by a fatal union abhorred by love, and condemned by honour, I would interpose my own, and plunge a poniard in thy breast. I would drain thy chaste heart of blood which infidelity never tainted: with that spotless blood I would mix my own, which burns in my veins with inextinguishable ardour; I would fall in thy arms; I would yield my last breath on thy lips—I would receive thine—How! Julia expiring! those lovely eyes closed by the horrors of death!—that breast, the throne of love, mangled by my hand, and pouring forth copious streams of blood and life!—No, live and suffer, endure the punishment of my cowardice. No, I wish thou wert no more, but my passion is not so violent as to stab thee. O, that you did but know the state of my heart, which is ready to burst with anguish! Never did it burn with so pure a flame. Never were your innocence and virtue so dear to me. I am a lover, I know how to prize an amiable object; I am sensible that I do: but I am no more than man, and it is not in human power to renounce supreme felicity. One night, one single night has made a thorough change in my soul. Preserve me, if thou canst, from that dan-

dangerous recollection, and I am virtuous still. But the remembrance of that fatal night is sunk to the bottom of my soul, and will darken all the rest of my days. O Julia, thou most adorable object! If we must be wretched for ever, yet let us enjoy one hour of transport, and then resign ourselves to eternal lamentations.

Listen to the man who loves you. Why should we alone affect to be wiser than the rest of mankind, and pursue, with puerile simplicity, those chimerical virtues which all the world talks of, and no one practises. What! shall we pretend to be greater moralists than the crowd of philosophers which people London and Paris, who all laugh at conjugal fidelity, and treat adultery as a jest? Instances of this nature are far from being scandalous; we are not at liberty even to censure them, and people of spirit would laugh at a man who should stifle the affections of his heart out of respect to matrimony. In fact, say they, an injury which only consists in opinion, is no injury while it remains secret. What injury does a husband receive from an infidelity of which he is ignorant? by how many obliging condescensions does a woman compensate for her failings *? what en-

O 3

dear-

* And where did the honest Swiss learn this? Women of gaiety have long since assumed more imperious airs. They begin by boldly introducing their lovers into the house; and if they suffer their husbands to continue there, it is only while they behave towards them with proper respect. A woman who should take pains to conceal a criminal intrigue, would shew that she was ashamed, and would be despised; not one female of spirit would take notice of her.

dearments does she not employ to prevent, and to remove his suspicions? Deprived of an imaginary good, he actually enjoys more real felicity; and this supposed crime which makes such a noise, is but an additional tie, which secures the peace of society.

O God forbid, thou dear partner of my soul, that I should wish to preserve thy affections by such shameful maxims! I abhor them, without being able to confute them, and my conscience is a better advocate than my reason. Not that I pride myself upon a spirit which I detest, or that I am fond of a virtue bought so dear: but I think it less criminal to reproach myself with my failings, than to attempt to vindicate them, and I consider an endeavour to stifle remorse, as the strongest degree of guilt.

I know not what I write. I find my mind in a horrid state, much worse than it was even before I received your letter. The hope you tender me is gloomy and melancholy; it totally extinguishes that pure light which has so often been our guide; your charms are blasted, and yet appear more affecting; I perceive that you are affectionate and unhappy: my heart is overwhelmed with the tears which flow from your eyes, and I bitterly reproach myself for having presumed to taste a happiness which I can no longer enjoy but at the hazard of your peace.

I perceive, nevertheless, that a secret ardour fires my soul, and revives that courage which my remorse has subdued. Ah, lovely Julia! do you know how many losses a love like mine can compensate? do you know how far a lover,
who

who only breathes for you, can make your life agreeable? are you sensible that it is for you alone I wish to live, to move, to think? No, thou delicious source of my existence, I will have no soul but thine, I will no longer be any thing but a part of thy lovely self, and you will meet with such a kind reception in the inmost recesses of my heart, that you will never perceive any decay in your charms. Well, we shall be guilty, yet we will not be wicked; we shall be guilty, yet we will be in love with virtue: so far from attempting to palliate our failings, we will bewail them; we will lament together; if possible, we will work our redemption by being good and benevolent. Julia! O Julia! what will you, what can you do? Thou canst never disengage thyself from my heart: is it not espoused to thine?

Those vain prospects of fortune which so palpably deluded me, are long since forgotten. I now solely confine my attention to the duties I owe Lord B——; he will force me with him to England; he imagines I can be of service to him there. Well, I will attend him. But I will steal away once every year; I will come in secret to visit you. If I cannot speak to you, at least I shall have the pleasure of gazing on you; I may at least kiss your footsteps; one glance from your eyes will support me ten months. When I am forced to return, and retire from her I love, it will be some consolation to me to count the steps which will bring me back again. These frequent journies will be some amusement to your unhappy lover; when he sets out to visit you, he will anticipate the pleasure

pleasure of beholding you; the remembrance of the transports he has felt, will enchant his imagination during his absence; in spite of his cruel destiny, his melancholy time will not be utterly lost; every year will be marked with some tincture of pleasure, and the short-lived moments he passes near you, will be multiplied during his whole life.

L E T T E R C X.

From Mrs ORBE.

YOUR mistress is no more; but I have regained my friend, and you too have acquired one, whose affection will more than recompense your loss. Julia is married, and her merit is sufficient to make the gentleman happy who has blended his interest with her's. After so many indiscretions, you ought to thank heaven which has preserved you both; her from ignominy, and you from the regret of having dishonoured her. Reverence her change of condition; do not write to her; she desires you will not. Wait till she writes to you, which she will shortly do. Now is the time to convince me that you merit that esteem I ever had for you, and that your heart is susceptible of a pure and disinterested friendship.

L E T T E R C X I.

From JULIA.

YOU have been so long the depositary of all the

the secrets of my soul, that it is not in my power to discontinue so agreeable a correspondence. In the most important occurrences of life I long to disclose my heart to you. Open yours, my beloved friend, to receive what I communicate; treasure up in your mind the long discourse of friendship, which, though it sometimes renders the speaker too diffusive, always makes the friendly hearer patient.

Attached to the fortune of a husband, or rather to the will of a parent, by an indissoluble tie, I enter upon a new state of life, which death alone can terminate: let us for a moment cast our eyes on that I have quitted; the recollection of former times cannot be painful to us. Perhaps it will afford some lessons, which will teach me how to make a proper use of the time to come: perhaps it will open some lights which may serve to explain those particulars of my conduct, which always appeared mysterious in your eyes. At least, by reflecting on the relation in which we lately stood to each other, our hearts will become more sensible of the reciprocal obligations from which death alone can release us.

It is now near six years since I first saw you. You was young, genteel, and agreeable; I had seen others more comely, and more engaging; but no one ever excited in me the least emotion, and my heart surrendered itself to you on the first interview. I imagined that I saw, in your countenance, the traces of a soul which seemed the counterpart of mine. I thought that my senses only served as organs to more refined sentiments; and I loved in you not so much what
I saw,

I saw, as what I imagined I felt within myself. It is not two months since, that I still flattered myself I was not mistaken: blind Love, said I, was in the right; we were made for each other, if human events do not interrupt the affinity of nature; and if we are allowed to enjoy felicity in this life, we shall certainly be happy together.

These sentiments were reciprocal; I should have been deceived had I entertained them alone. The love I felt could not arise but from a mutual conformity and harmony of souls. We never love unless we are beloved; at least our passion is short-lived. Those affections which meet with no return, and which are supposed to make so many wretched, are only founded on sensuality; if ever they penetrate the heart, it is by means of some false resemblance, and the mistake is quickly discovered. Sensual love cannot subsist without fruition, and dies with it: the sublimer passion cannot be satisfied without engaging the heart, and is as permanent as the analogy which gave it birth*. Such was ours from the beginning; and such, I hope, it will ever be to the end of our days. I perceived, I felt that I was beloved, and that I merited your affection. My lips were silent, my looks were constrained; but my heart made itself understood: we quickly experienced I know not what, which renders silence eloquent, which gives utterance to the downcast eye, which occasions
a kind

* Admitting the analogy to be chimerical, yet it lasts as long as the illusion, which makes us suppose it real.

a kind of forward bashfulness which discovers the tumult of desire through the vail of timidity, and conveys ideas which it dares not express.

I perceived the situation of my heart, and judged myself lost the first word you spoke. I observed what pain your reserve cost you. I approved of the distance you observed, and admired you the more; I endeavoured to recompense you for such a necessary and painful silence, without prejudice to my innocence: I offered violence to my natural disposition; I imitated my cousin; I became, like her, arch and lively, to avoid too serious explanations, and to indulge a thousand tender caresses under cover of that affected sprightliness. I took such pains to make your situation agreeable, that the apprehensions of a change increased your reserve.

This scheme turned to my disadvantage: we generally suffer for assuming a borrowed character. Fool that I was! I accelerated my ruin, instead of preventing it; I employed poison as a palliative; and what should have induced you to preserve silence, was the occasion which tempted you to explain yourself. In vain did I attempt, by an affected indifference, to keep you at a distance in our private interviews; that very constraint betrayed me: you wrote. Instead of committing your first letter to the fire, or delivering it to my mother, I ventured to open it. That was my original crime, and all the rest was a necessary consequence of that first fault. I endeavoured to avoid answering those fatal letters, which I could not forbear reading. This violent struggle affected my health. I saw the
abyss

abyss in which I was going to plunge. I looked upon myself with horror, and could not resolve to endure your absence. I fell into a kind of despair: I had rather that you had ceased to live, than not to live for me: I went so far as to wish your death; nay, even to desire it. Heaven knew my heart; these efforts may make amends for some failings.

Finding you disposed to implicit obedience, I was determined to speak. I had received from Challiot some instructions, which made me too sensible of the danger of avowing my passion. But love, which extorted the confession, taught me to elude its consequence. You was my last resort; I had such an entire confidence in you, that I furnished you with arms against my weakness; such was my opinion of your integrity, that I trusted you would preserve me from myself, and I did you no more than justice. When I found the respect you paid to so valuable a trust, I perceived that my passion had not blinded me in my opinion of those virtues with which I supposed you endowed. I resigned myself with greater security, as I imagined that we should both of us be contented with a sentimental affection. As I discovered nothing at the bottom of my heart but sentiments of honour, I tasted without reserve the charms of such a delightful intimacy. Alas! I did not perceive that my disorder grew inveterate from inattention, and that habit was still more dangerous than love. Being sensibly affected by your reserve, I thought I might relax mine without any risque; in the innocence of my desires I hoped to lead you to the heights of virtue, by the tender caresses of friendship.

friendship. But the grove at Clarens soon convinced me that I trusted myself too far; and that we ought not to grant the least indulgence to the senses, where prudence forbids us to gratify them entirely. One moment, one single moment, fired me with a desire which nothing could extinguish; and if my will yet resisted, my heart was from that time corrupted.

You partook of my distraction; your letter made me tremble. The danger was double: to preserve me from you and from myself, it was necessary to banish you. This was the last effort of expiring virtue: but by your flight, you made your conquest sure; and when I saw you no more, the languor your absence occasioned, deprived me of the little strength I had left to resist you.

When my father quitted the service, he brought M. Wolmar home with him. His life which he owed to him, and an intimacy of twenty years, rendered this friend so dear, that he could never part from him. M. Wolmar was advanced in years, and though of high birth had met with no woman who had fixed his affections. My father mentioned me to him, as to a man whom he wished to call his son: he was desirous to see me, and it was with this intent they came together. It was my fate to be agreeable to him, who never was susceptible of any impression before. They entered into secret engagements, and M. Wolmar, who had some affairs to settle in one of the northern courts, where his family and fortune were, desired time, and took leave upon their mutual engagement. After this departure, my father acquainted my

mother and me, that he designed him for my husband ; and commanded me, with a tone which cut off all reply from my timidity, to prepare myself to receive his hand. My mother, who too plainly perceived the inclinations of my heart, and who had a natural liking for you, made several attempts to shake my father's resolution. She durst not absolutely propose you ; but she spoke of you in such terms, as she hoped might make my father esteem you, and wish to be acquainted with you : but your rank in life made him insensible to all your accomplishments ; and though he allowed that high-birth could not supply them, yet he maintained that birth alone could make them valuable.

The impossibility of being happy, fanned the flame which it ought to have extinguished. A flattering delusion had supported me under all my troubles ; when that was gone, I had no strength to oppose them. While I had the least hope of being yours, I might have triumphed over my inclinations ; it would have cost me less to have spent my whole life in resistance, than to renounce you for ever ; and the very idea of an everlasting opposition, deprived me of fortitude to subdue my passion.

Grief and love preyed upon my heart ; I fell into a state of dejection, which you might perceive in my letters : yours, which you wrote to me from Meillerie, completed my affliction ; to the measure of my own troubles was added the sense of your despair. Alas ! the weakest mind is always destined to bear the troubles of both. The scheme you ventured to propose to me put the finishing stroke to my perplexity. Misery
seemed

seemed to be the infallible lot of my days ; the inevitable choice which remained for me to make, was to add to it either your infelicity or that of my parents. I could not endure the horrible alternative ; the power of nature has its bounds ; such agitations overpowered my strength. I wished to be delivered from life. Heaven seemed to take pity of me ; but cruel death spared me for my destruction. I saw you, I recovered, and was undone.

If my failings did not contribute to my felicity, I was not disappointed : I never considered them as the means to procure happiness. I perceived that my heart was formed for virtue, without which I could never be happy ; I fell through weakness, not from error ; I had not even blindness to plead in excuse for my frailty. I was bereaved of every hope ; it was impossible for me to be otherwise than unfortunate. Innocence and love were equally requisite to my peace : as I could not preserve them both, and was witness to your distraction, I consulted your interest alone in my choice ; and so ruined myself, to save you.

But it is not so easy, as many imagine, to forsake virtue. She continues long to torment those who abandon her ; and her charms, which are the delight of refined souls, constitute the chief punishment of the wicked, who are condemned to be in love with her when they can no longer enjoy her. Guilty, yet not depraved, I could not escape the remorse which pursued me ; honour was dear to me, even after it was gone ; though my shame was secret, it was not less grievous ; and though the whole world

had been witness to it, I could not have been more sensibly affected. I comforted myself under my affliction, like one who having a wound dreads a mortification; and who, by the sense of pain, is encouraged not to despair of a cure.

Nevertheless, my shameful state was insupportable. By endeavouring to stifle the reproach of guilt, without renouncing the crime, I experienced what every honest mind feels when it goes astray, and is fond of its mistake. A new delusion lent its aid to assuage the bitterness of repentance; I flattered myself, that my frailty would afford me the means of repairing my indiscretion, and ventured to form a design of forcing my father to unite our hands. I depended on the first pledge of our love to close this delightful union. I prayed to heaven for offspring as the pledge of my return to virtue, and of our mutual happiness: I wished for it with as much earnestness as another in my place would have dreaded it. The tenderness of love, by its soft illusion, allayed the murmurs of my conscience; the effects I hoped to derive from my frailty inspired me with consolation, and this pleasing expectation was all the hope and comfort of my life.

As soon as I should discover evident symptoms of my pregnancy, I was determined to make a public declaration of my condition to Mr Perret *, in the presence of the whole family. I am timorous, it is true: I was sensible how dear
such

* Minister of the parish.

such a declaration would cost me : but honour itself inspired me with courage, and I chose rather to bear at once the confusion I deserved, than to nourish everlasting infamy at the bottom of my soul. I knew that my father would either doom me to death, or give me to my lover : this alternative had nothing in it terrible to my apprehension ; and whatever might be the event, I considered that this step would bring all my sufferings to a period.

This, my dear friend, was the mystery which I concealed from you, and which you so anxiously endeavoured to penetrate. A thousand reasons conspired to make this reserve necessary with a man of your impetuosity, not to mention that it would have been imprudent to have armed your indiscreet importunity with a new pretext. It was above all things requisite to remove you during such a perilous situation, and I well knew that you would never have consented to leave me in such an extremity, had you been acquainted with it.

Alas ! I was once more deceived by such a flattering expectation. Heaven refused to favour designs which were conceived in wickedness. I did not deserve the honour of being a mother ; my scheme was abortive, and I was even deprived of an opportunity of expiating my frailty, at the expence of my reputation. Disappointed in my hope, the indiscreet assignation which exposed your life to danger, was a rashness which my fond love coloured with this gentle palliation : I imputed the ill success of my wishes to myself ; and my heart, misled by its desires, flattered itself that its eagerness to gratify

them arose entirely from my anxiety to render them lawful hereafter.

At one time I thought my wishes accomplished : that mistake was the source of my most bitter affliction, and after nature had granted the petition of love, the stroke of destiny came with aggravated cruelty. You know the accident which destroyed my last hopes, together with the fruit of my love. That misfortune happened during our separation, as if heaven at that time intended to oppress me with all the evils I merited, and to cut off at once every tie by which our union might be accomplished.

Your departure put an end to my delusion and to my pleasures ; I discovered, but too late, the chimeras which had imposed upon me. I perceived that I had fallen into a state truly despicable, and felt myself completely wretched ; which was the inevitable consequence of love without innocence, and hopeless desires which I could never extinguish. Tortured by a thousand fruitless griefs, I stifled reflections which were as painful as unprofitable ; I no longer looked upon myself as worthy of consideration, and devoted my life to solitude for you : I had no honour, but yours ; no hope, but in your happiness ; and no sentiments were capable of affecting me but those which came from you.

Love did not make me blind to your faults, but it made those faults dear to me ; and so powerful was its delusion, that I should have loved you less, had you been more perfect. Acquainted with your heart and your impetuosity of temper, I was sensible, that with more courage than I, you had less patience, and that the

the afflictions which oppressed my soul would drive yours to despair. It was for this reason I always carefully concealed from you my father's promise ; and at our parting, taking advantage of Lord B——'s zeal for your interest, and with a view to make you more attentive to your own welfare, flattered you with a hope which I myself did not entertain. Yet more ; apprized of the danger which threatened us, I took the only precaution for our mutual security, and by a solemn engagement having made you as much as possible master of my will, I hoped to inspire you with confidence, and myself with fortitude, by means of a promise which I never durst violate, and which might insure your tranquillity of mind. I own it was a needless obligation, and yet I should never have infringed it. Virtue is so essential to our souls, that when we have once abandoned that which is real, we presently fashion another after the same model, and keep the more strongly attached to this substitute, because perhaps it is of our own choosing.

I need not tell you what perturbation I experienced after your departure. The worst of my apprehensions was the dread of being forsaken. The place of your residence made me tremble. Your manner of living increased my terror. I imagined that I already saw you debased into a man of intrigue. An ignominy of this nature touched me more sensibly than all my afflictions ; I had rather have seen you wretched than contemptible ; after so many troubles to which I had been inured, your dishonour was the only one I could not support.

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These apprehensions, which the style of your letters had begun to confirm, were quickly removed; and by such means as would have made any other completely uneasy. I allude to the disorderly course of life into which you was seduced, and of which your ready and frank confession was, of all the proofs of your sincerity, that which affected me most sensibly. I knew you too well to be ignorant what such a confession must have cost you, even if I had been no longer dear to you. I saw that love alone had triumphed over shame, and extorted it from you. I judged that a heart so sincere was incapable of disguised infidelity; I discovered less guilt in your failing, than merit in the confession; and calling to mind your former engagements, was entirely cured of jealousy.

And yet, my worthy friend, my cure did not increase my felicity; for one torment less, a thousand others rose up incessantly; and I was never more sensible of the folly of seeking in an unsettled mind, that repose which nothing but prudence can bestow. I had for a long time secretly lamented the best of mothers, who wasted insensibly by a fatal decay. Bab, whom the unhappy consequence of my misconduct obliged me to make my confidant, betrayed me, and discovered our mutual love, and my frailty, to my mother. I had just received your letters from my cousin, when they were seized. The proofs were too convincing; grief deprived her of the little strength her illness had left her. I thought I should have expired at her feet with remorse. So far from consigning me to the death I merited, she concealed my shame, and was

was contented to bemoan my fall. Even you, who had so ungratefully abused her kindness, did not become odious to her. I was witness to the effect which your letter produced on her tender and affectionate mind. Alas! she wished for your happiness and mine. She attempted more than once—but why should I recal a hope which is now for ever extinguished? heaven decreed it otherwise. She closed her melancholy days with the afflicting consideration of being unable to move a rigid husband, and of leaving a daughter behind so little worthy of her.

Oppressed with such a cruel loss, my soul had no other strength than what it received from that impression; the voice of nature uttered groans which stifled the murmurs of love. I regarded the author of my troubles with a kind of horror. I endeavoured to smother the detestable passion which had brought them upon me, and to renounce you for ever. This, no doubt, was what I ought to have done: had I not sufficient cause of lamentation the remainder of my days, without searching for new subjects of affliction? Every thing seemed to favour my resolution. If melancholy softens the mind, deep affliction hardens it. The remembrance of my dying mother effaced your image; we were distant from each other; hope had entirely abandoned me; my incomparable friend was never more great or more deserving wholly to engross my heart. Her virtue, her discretion, her friendship, her tender caresses, seemed to have purified it; I thought I had forgotten you, and imagined myself cured. But it was too late; what I took for the indifference of
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extinguished love, was nothing but the heaviness of despair.

As a sick man who falls into a weak state when free from pain, is suddenly revived by more acute sensations; so I quickly perceived all my troubles renewed, when my father acquainted me with Mr Wolmar's approaching return. Invincible love then gave me incredible strength. For the first time I ventured to oppose my father to his face. I frankly protested that I could never like Mr Wolmar; that I was determined to die single; that he was master of my life, but not of my affections; and that nothing could ever make me alter my resolution. I need not describe the rage he was in, nor the treatment I was obliged to endure. I was immovable: my timidity once vanquished carried me to the other extreme; and if my tone was less imperious than my father's, it was nevertheless equally resolute.

He found that I was determined, and that he should make no impression on me by dint of authority. For a minute I thought myself freed from his persecution. But what became of me, when on a sudden I saw the most rigid father softened into tears, and prostrate at my feet! Without suffering me to rise, he embraced my knees, and fixing his streaming eyes on mine, he addressed himself to me in a plaintive voice, which still murmurs in my ears, "O my child! have some respect for the grey hairs of your unhappy father; do not send me with sorrow to the grave, after her who bore thee. Ah! will all her family owe their deaths to Julia?"

Imagine my grief and astonishment. That
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attitude, that tone, that gesture, those words, that horrible idea, overpowered me to that degree, that I dropped half dead into his arms; and it was not till after repeated sobs, which for some time stifled utterance, that I was able to answer him in a faint and faltering voice: "O my father! I was armed against your menaces, but I am not proof against your tears. You will be the death of your daughter."

We were both of us in such violent agitation, that it was a long while before we recovered. In the mean time, recollecting his last words, I concluded that he was better informed of the particulars of my conduct than I had imagined; and being resolved to turn those circumstances of information against him, I was preparing, at the hazard of my life, to make a confession which I had too long deferred, when he hastily interrupted me, and, as if he had foreseen and dreaded what I was going to declare, spoke to me in the following terms.

"I know you have encouraged inclinations unworthy a girl of your birth. It is time to sacrifice to duty and honour a shameful passion which you shall never gratify but at the expence of my life. Attend to what your father's honour, and your own, require of you, and then determine for yourself.

"Mr Wolmar is of noble extraction, and distinguished by all the accomplishments requisite to maintain his dignity; one who enjoys the public esteem, and who deserves it. I am indebted to him for my life; and you are no stranger to the engagement I have concluded with him. You are farther to understand,

“ stand, that on his return home to settle his
 “ concerns, he found himself involved by an
 “ unfortunate turn of affairs: he had lost the
 “ greatest part of his estate, and it was by sin-
 “ gular good luck that he himself escaped being
 “ exiled to Siberia: he is coming back with
 “ the melancholy wreck of his fortune, upon
 “ the strength of his friend’s word, which ne-
 “ ver yet was forfeited. Tell me now, in what
 “ manner I shall receive him on his return;
 “ shall I say to him, ‘ Sir, I promised you my
 “ daughter while you were in affluent circum-
 “ stances; but, now your fortune is ruined, I
 “ must retract my word, for my daughter will
 “ never be yours?’ If I do not express my refu-
 “ sal in these words, it will be interpreted in
 “ this manner. To alledge your pre-engage-
 “ ment, will be considered as a pretence; or it
 “ will be imputed as an additional disgrace to
 “ me; and we shall pass you for an abandoned
 “ girl, and I for a dishonest man, who has sa-
 “ crificed his word and honour to sordid inter-
 “ est, and has added ingratitude to infidelity.
 “ My dear child, I have lived too long now to
 “ close an unblemished life with infamy, and
 “ sixty years spent with honour are not to be
 “ prostituted in a quarter of an hour.

“ You perceive, therefore,” continued he,
 “ how unreasonable is every objection which
 “ you can offer. Judge whether the giddy pas-
 “ sion of youth, whether attachments which
 “ modesty disavows, are to be put in competi-
 “ tion with the duty of a child, and the honour
 “ by which a parent stands bound. If the dis-
 “ pute were, which of us two should fall a vic-
 “ tim

“tim to the happiness of the other, my tenderness would challenge the right of making that sacrifice to affection; but honour, my child, calls upon me, and that always determines the resolution of him whose blood you inherit.”

I was not without a pertinent answer to these remonstrances; but my father's prejudices confirmed him in his principles, so different from mine, that reasons which appeared to me unanswerable, would not have had the least weight with him. Besides, not knowing whence he had gathered the intelligence he seemed to have gained with respect to my conduct, or how far his information extended; apprehending likewise by his eagerness to interrupt me, that he had formed his resolution with regard to the matter I was going to communicate; and above all, being restrained by a sense of shame which I could never subdue; I rather chose to avail myself of an excuse, which I thought would have greater weight, as it squared more with my father's peculiarity of thinking. I therefore made a frank declaration of the engagement I had made with you; I protested that I would never be false to my word, and that, whatever was the consequence, I would never marry without your consent.

In truth, I was delighted to find that my scruples did not offend him: he reproached me severely for entering into such an engagement, but he made no objection to its validity; so exalted are ideas which a gentleman of honour naturally entertains with regard to the faith of engagements, and so sacred a thing does he esteem a promise! Instead of attempting therefore to

dispute the force of my obligation to you, he made me write a note, which he inclosed in a letter, and sent away directly *. With what agitation did I expect your answer! how often did I wish that you might shew less delicacy than you ought! But I knew you too well to doubt your compliance; and was sensible, that the more painful you felt the sacrifice required of you, the readier you would be to undergo it. Your answer came, it was concealed from me during my illness; after my recovery, my fears were confirmed, and there remained for me no farther excuses. At least, my father declared he would admit of no more; and the dreadful expression he had made use of, gave him such an ascendancy over my will, that he made me swear never to say any thing to Mr Wolmar which might make him averse from marrying me; for, he added, that will appear to him like a trick concerted between us, and at all events the marriage must be concluded.

You know, my dear friend, that my constitution, which is strong enough to endure fatigue and inclemency of weather, is not able to resist the violence of passion, and that too exquisite a sensibility is the source of all the evils which have afflicted my mind and body. Whether continued grief had tainted my blood, or whether nature took that opportunity to purify it from the fatal effects of fermentation, I found myself violently disordered at the end of our conversation. When I left my father's room, I endeavoured to write a line to you, but found myself

* See page 142 of the present volume.

self so ill, that I was obliged to go to bed, from whence I hoped never to rise. You are too well acquainted with the rest. My imprudence led you to indiscretion. You came, I saw you, and thought that I had only beheld you in one of those dreams, which, during my delirium, so often presented your image before me. But when I found that you had really been there; that I had actually seen you; that being resolved to partake of my distemper which you could not cure, you had purposely caught the infection; I could no longer resist this last proof; and finding that the tenderness of your affection survived even hope itself, my love, which I had taken such pains to smother, instantly broke through all restraint, and revived with more ardour than ever. I perceived that I was doomed to love in spite of myself; I was sensible that I must be guilty; that I could neither resist my father nor my love; and that I could never reconcile the rights of love and consanguinity, but at the expence of honour. Thus all my noble sentiments were utterly extinguished; all my faculties were altered; guilt was no longer horrible in my sight; I felt a thorough change within me: at length the unruly transports of a passion, rendered impetuous by opposition, threw me into the most dismal dejection with which human nature was ever oppressed; I even dared to despair of virtue. Your letter, which was rather calculated to awaken remorse than to stifle it, completed my distraction. My heart was so far depraved, that my reason could not withstand the arguments of your plausible philosophy. Such horrible ideas crowded into my

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mind,

mind, as it had never been tainted with before. My will still opposed them, but my imagination grew familiar with them; and if my soul did not harbour anticipated guilt, yet I was no longer mistress of that noble resolution which alone is capable of resisting temptation.

I am scarce able to proceed. Let me stop a while. Recal to your mind those days of innocence and felicity, when the lively and tender passion with which we were mutually animated, only tended to refine our sentiments; when that holy ardour contributed to render modesty more lovely, and honour more amiable; when our very desires seemed kindled only that we might have the glory of subduing them, and of rendering ourselves more worthy of each other. Look over our first letters; reflect on those moments so fleeting and so little enjoyed, when love appeared to us arrayed in all the charms of virtue, and when we were too fond of each other to form any connections which she condemned.

What were we then, and what are we now? Two tender lovers spent a whole year together in the most painful silence; they scarce ventured to breathe a sigh, but their hearts understood each other; they thought their sufferings great; yet they were happy, had they but known it. Their mutual silence was so intelligible, that at length they ventured to converse; but, satisfied with the power of triumphing over their inclinations, and with giving each other the glorious proofs of their victory, they passed another year in a reserve scarce less severe; they imparted their troubles to each other, and were happy. But these violent struggles were too painful to
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be supported long; one moment's weakness led them astray; they forgot themselves in their transports: but if they were no longer chaste, they were still constant; at least heaven and nature authorised the ties which united them; at least virtue was still dear to them; they still loved and honoured her charms; they were less corrupted than debased. They still enjoyed felicity, though less worthy of it.

What now are those affectionate lovers who glowed with so refined a passion, and were so sensible of the worth of honour? Who can be acquainted with their condition, without sighing over them?—Behold them a prey to guilt. Even the idea of defiling the marriage-bed does not now strike them with horror—they meditate adultery!—How! is it possible that they can be the same pair? Are not their souls entirely altered? How could that lovely image, which the wicked never behold, be effaced in the minds where it once shone so bright? Are not they, who have once tasted of the charms of virtue, for ever after disgusted with vice? How many ages have passed to produce this astonishing alteration? What length of time could be capable of destroying so delightful a remembrance, and of extinguishing the true sense of happiness in those who had once enjoyed it? Alas! if the first step of irregularity moves with a slow and painful pace, how easy and precipitate are those which follow! How great is the illusion of passion! it is that which fascinates reason, betrays prudence, and new-models nature before we perceive the change. A single moment leads us astray; a single step draws us out of the right

path. From that time an irresistible propensity hurries us on to our ruin. From that time we fall into a gulph, and arise frightened to find ourselves oppressed with crimes, with hearts formed for virtue. My dear friend, let us drop the curtain. Can it be necessary to see the dangerous precipice it conceals from us, in order to avoid approaching it? I resume my narrative.

Mr Wolmar arrived, and made no objection to the alteration in my features. My father pressed me. The mourning for my mother was just over, and my grief was proof against time. I could form no pretence to elude my promise; and was under a necessity of fulfilling it. I thought the day which was to separate me for ever from you and from myself, would have been the last of my life. I could have beheld the preparations for my funeral with less horror than those for my marriage. The nearer the fatal moment approached, the less I found myself able to extirpate my first affections; my efforts rather served to inflame than to extinguish them. At length I gave over the fruitless struggle. At the very time that I was prepared to swear eternal constancy to another, my heart still vowed eternal love to thee; and I was carried to the temple as a polluted victim, which defiles the altar on which it is sacrificed.

When I came to the church, I felt, at my entrance, a kind of emotion which I had never experienced before. An inconceivable terror seized my mind in that solemn and august place, which was full of the Being worshipped there. A sudden horror made me shiver. Trembling and ready to faint, it was with difficulty I reached

ed the altar. Far from being composed, I found my disorder increase during the ceremony, and every object I beheld struck me with dismay. The gloomy light of the temple; the profound silence of the spectators, and their decent and collected deportment; the train of all my relations; the awful look of my venerable father; all contributed to give the ceremony an air of solemnity which commanded my attention and reverence, and which made me shudder at the very thought of perjury. I imagined that I beheld the instrument of Providence, and that I heard the voice of heaven, in the minister, who pronounced the holy liturgy with uncommon solemnity. The purity, the dignity, the sanctity of marriage, so forcibly expressed in the words of Scripture; the chaste the sublime duties it inculcates, and which are so important to the happiness, the order, the peace, the being of human nature, so agreeable in themselves to be observed; all conspired to make such an impression upon me, that I felt a thorough revolution within me. An invisible power seemed suddenly to rectify the disorder of my affections, and to settle them according to the laws of duty and of nature. The eternal and omnipresent Power, said I to myself, now reads the bottom of my soul; he compares my secret will with my verbal declaration; heaven and earth are witnesses to the solemn engagement I am going to contract; and they shall be witnesses of my fidelity in observing the obligation. What human duty can they regard, who dare to violate the first and most sacred of all?

A casual glance on Mr and Mrs Orbe, whom
I saw

I saw at the side of each other, fixing their tender looks on me, affected me more powerfully than did all the other objects around me. "O most amiable and virtuous pair! though your love is less violent, are you therefore less closely attached to each other? Duty and honour are the bonds which unite you; affectionate friends! faithful couple! you do not burn with that devouring flame which consumes the soul, but you love each other with a gentle and refined affection, which nourishes the mind, which prudence authorises, and which reason directs; you therefore enjoy more substantial felicity. Ah! that, in an union like yours, I could recover the same innocence, and attain the same happiness! if I have not like you deserved it, I will at least endeavour to make myself worthy of it by your example." These sentiments awakened my hopes, and revived my courage. I considered the sacred tie I was preparing to form, as a new state which would purify my soul, and restore me to a just sense of my duty. When the minister asked me, whether I promised perfect obedience and fidelity to him whom I received for my husband, I made the promise not only with my lips but with my heart; and I will keep it inviolably till my death.

When we returned home, I sighed for an hour's solitude and recollection. I obtained it, not without difficulty; and however eager I was to make the best advantage of it, I nevertheless entered into self-examination with reluctance, being afraid lest I should discover that I had only been affected by some transitory impressions, and that at the bottom I should find myself as un-

unworthy a wife, as I had been an indiscreet girl. The method of making the trial was sure, but dangerous; I began it by turning my thoughts on you. My heart bore witness that no tender recollection had profaned the solemn engagement I had lately made. I could not conceive, without astonishment, how your image could have forborne its obstinate intrusion, and have left me so long at rest, amidst so many occasions which might have recalled you to my mind; I should have mistrusted my insensibility and forgetfulness, as treacherous dependences, which were too unnatural to be lasting. I found, however, that I was in no danger of delusion: I was sensible that I still loved you as much, if not more than ever; but I felt my affection for you without a blush. I found that I could venture to think of you, without forgetting that I was the wife of another. When a tacit self-confession reported how dear you was to me, my heart was affected, but my conscience and my senses were composed; and from that moment I perceived that my mind had undergone a real change. What a torrent of pure joy then rushed into my soul! what tranquil sensations, so long effaced, then began to revive a heart which ignominy had stained, and to diffuse over my whole frame an unusual serenity! I seemed as if I had been new born, and fancied that I was entering into another life. O gentle and balmy virtue! I am regenerated for thee; thou alone canst make life dear to me; to thee alone I consecrate my being. Oh! I have too fatally experienced the loss of thee, ever to abandon thee a second time.

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In the rapture of a change so great, so sudden, so unexpected, I ventured to reflect on my situation the preceding day: I trembled on thinking on what a state of unworthy debasement I had been reduced by forgetting what I owed to myself; and I shuddered at all the dangers I had run since my first step of deviation. What a happy revolution of mind enabled me to discover the horror of the crime which threw temptation before me; and how did the love of discretion revive within me! By what uncommon accident, said I, could I hope to be more faithful to love, than to honour, which I held in such high esteem? what good fortune would prevent your inconstancy or my own, from delivering me a prey to new attachments? how could I oppose to another lover, that resistance which the first had conquered, and that shame which had been accustomed to yield to inclination? Should I pay more regard to the rights of extinguished love, than I did to the claim of virtue, while it maintained its full empire in my soul? What security could I have to love no other but you, except that inward assurance which deceives all lovers, who swear eternal constancy, and inconsiderately perjure themselves upon every change of their affections? Thus one deviation from virtue would have led to another; and vice, grown habitual, would no longer have appeared horrible in my sight. Fallen from honour to infamy, without any hold to stop me; from a seduced virgin I should have become an abandoned woman, the scandal of my sex, and the torment of my family. What has saved me from so natural a
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consequence of my first transgression? what checked me after my first guilty step? what has preserved my reputation, and the esteem of my beloved friends? what has placed me under the protection of a virtuous and discreet husband, whose character is amiable, whose person is agreeable, and who is full of that respect and affection for me which I have so little deserved? what, in short, enables me to aspire after the character of a virtuous wife, and gives me courage to render myself worthy of that title? I see, I feel it; it is the friendly hand which has conducted me through the paths of darkness, that now removes the vail of error from my eyes; and, in my own despite, restores me to myself. The gentle voice which incessantly murmured within me now raised its tone, and thundered in my ears, at the very moment that I was near being lost for ever. The Author of all truth would not allow me to quit his presence with the conscious guilt of detestable perjury; and preventing my crime by my remorse, hath shewn me the frightful abyss into which I was ready to fall. Eternal Providence! who dost make the insect crawl, and the heavens revolve, thou art watchful over the least of all thy works! thou hast recalled me to that virtue which I was born to revere! deign therefore to receive from a heart purified by thy goodness, that homage which thou alone hast rendered worthy thy acceptance.

That instant, being impressed with a lively sense of the danger I had escaped, and of the state of honour and security in which I was happily re-established, I prostrated myself on the ground,

ground, and lifting my suppliant hands to heaven, I invoked that Being enthroned on high, whose pleasure supports or destroys, by means of our own strength, that free-will he has bestowed. "I eagerly (said I) embrace the proffered good, of which Thou alone art the author. I will love the husband to whom thou hast attached me. I will be faithful, because it is the chief duty which unites private families and society in general. I will be chaste, because it is the parent virtue which nourishes all the rest. I will adhere to every thing relative to the order of nature which thou hast established, and to the dictates of reason which I derive from thee. I recommend my heart to thy protection, and my desires to thy guidance. Render all my actions conformable to my steadfast will, which is ever thine; and never more permit momentary error to triumph over the settled choice of my life."

After this short prayer, the first I ever made with true devotion, I found myself confirmed in virtuous resolutions; it seemed so easy and so agreeable to follow these dictates, that I clearly perceived where I must hereafter resort for that power to resist my inclinations which I could not derive from myself. From this new discovery I acquired fresh confidence, and lamented that fatal blindness which had so long concealed it from me. I had never been devoid of religion; but perhaps I had better have been wholly so, than to have professed one which was external and mechanical; and which satisfied the conscience, without affecting the heart; one which was confined to set forms, and taught
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me to believe in God at stated hours, without thinking of him the remainder of my time. Scrupulously attendant on public worship, I nevertheless drew no advantage from it to assist me in the practice of my duty. Knowing that I was of a good family, I indulged my inclinations, was fond of speculation, and put my trust in reason. Not being able to reconcile the spirit of the gospel with the manners of the world, nor faith with works, I steered a middle course, which satisfied the vanity of my wisdom: I had one set of maxims for speculation, and another for practice; I forgot in one place the opinions I formed in another; I was a devotee at church, and a philosopher at home: alas! I was nothing any-where: my prayers were but words, my reasoning mere sophistry, and the only light I followed was the false glimmering of an *ignis fatuus*, which led me to destruction.

I cannot describe to you how much this inward principle, which had escaped me till now, made me despise those by which I had been so shamefully misguided. Tell me, I intreat you, what was the strongest reason in their support, and on what foundation did they rest? A favourable instinct directs me to good, some impetuous passion rises in opposition; it takes root in the same instinct, what must I do to destroy it? From a contemplation on the order of nature, I discover the beauty of virtue, and from its general utility I derive its excellence. But what avail these arguments, when they stand in competition to my private interest? and which in the end is of most consequence to me, to pro-

cure my own happiness at the expence of others, or to promote the felicity of others at the expence of my own happiness? If the dread of shame or punishment deters me from committing evil for the sake of my own private good, I have nothing more to do than to sin in secret: virtue then cannot upbraid me; and if I am detected, I shall be punished, as at Sparta, not on account of my crime, but because I had not ingenuity to conceal it. In short, admitting the character and the love of virtue to be imprinted in my heart by nature, it will serve me as a rule of conduct till its impressions are defaced; but how shall I be sure always to preserve this inward effigy in its original purity, which has no model, among sublunary beings, to which it can be referred? Is it not evident, that irregular affections corrupt the judgment as well as the will; and that conscience itself changes, and in every age, in every people, in every individual, accommodates itself to inconstancy of opinion and diversity of prejudice?

Adore the supreme Being, my worthy and prudent friend; with one puff of breath you will be able to dissipate those chimeras of reason, which have only a visionary appearance, and which fly like so many shadows before immutable truth. Nothing exists but through Him who is self-existent. It is he who directs the tendency of justice, fixes the basis of virtue, and gives a recompense to a short life spent according to his will: it is he who proclaims aloud to the guilty, that their secret crimes are detected, and gives assurance to the righteous in obscurity, that their virtues are not without

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a witness: it is he, it is his unalterable substance, that is the true model of those perfections of which we all bear the image within us. It is in vain that our passions disfigure it; its traces, which are allied to the infinite Being, ever present themselves to our reason, and serve to re-establish that which error and imposture have perverted. These distinctions seem to me extremely natural; common sense is sufficient to point them out. Every thing which we cannot separate from the idea of divine essence, is God; all the rest is the work of men. It is by the contemplation of this divine model, that the soul becomes refined and exalted; that it learns to despise low desires, and to triumph over base inclinations. A heart impressed with these sublime truths, is superior to the mean passions of human nature; the idea of infinite grandeur subdues the pride of man; the delight of contemplation abstracts him from gross desires; and if the immense Being, who is the subject of his thoughts, had no existence, it would nevertheless be of use to exercise his mind in such meditations, in order to make him more master of himself, more vigorous, more happy, and more wise.

Do you require a particular instance of those vain subtleties framed by that self-sufficient reason, which so vainly relies on its own strength? Let us coolly examine the arguments of those philosophers, those worthy advocates of a crime, which never yet seduced any whose minds were not previously corrupted. Might one not conclude, that, by a direct attack on the most holy and most solemn of all contracts, those danger-

ous disputants were determined at one stroke to annihilate human society in general, which is founded on the faith of engagements? But observe, I beseech you, how they exculpate secret adultery? It is, say they, because no mischief results from it; not even to the husband, who is ignorant of the wrong. But can they be certain that he will ever remain ignorant of it? Is it sufficient to authorise perjury and infidelity, that they do no wrong to others? Is the mischief which the guilty do to themselves, not sufficient to create an abhorrence of guilt? Is it no crime to be false to our word? to destroy, as far as we are able, the obligation of oaths, and the most inviolable contracts? Is it no crime to take pains to render ourselves false, treacherous, and perjured? Is it no crime to form attachments which occasion you to desire the prejudice, and to wish the death of another? Even the death of one whom we ought to love above others, and with whom we have sworn to live? is not that state in itself an evil, which is productive of a thousand consequential crimes? even good itself, if attended with so many mischiefs, would, for that reason only, be an evil.

Shall one of the parties pretend to innocence, who may chance to be disengaged, and have pledged his faith to no one? he is grossly mistaken. It is not only the interest of husband and wife, but it is the common benefit of mankind, that the purity of marriage be preserved unfulfilled. Whenever two persons are joined together by that solemn contract, all mankind enter into a tacit engagement to respect the sacred tie, and to honour the conjugal union; and
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this appears to be a powerful reason against clandestine marriages, which, as they express no public sign of such an union, expose innocent maids to the temptation of adulterous passion. The public are in some measure guarantees of a contract which passes in their presence; and we may venture to say, that the honour of a modest woman is under the special protection of all good and worthy people. Whoever therefore dares to seduce her, is criminal; first because he has tempted her to sin, and that every one is an accomplice in those crimes which he persuades others to commit: in the next place, he sins directly himself, because he violates the public and sacred faith of matrimony, without which no order or regularity can subsist in society.

The crime, say they, is secret, consequently no injury can result from it to any one. If these philosophers believe the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul, can they call that crime secret which has for its witness the Being principally offended, and the only righteous judge? It is a strange kind of a secret which is hid from all eyes except those from which it is our interest most to conceal it! If they do not however admit of the omnipresence of the Divinity, yet how can they dare to affirm that they do injury to no one? How can they prove that it is a matter of indifference to a parent to educate heirs who are strangers to his blood? to be encumbered perhaps with more children than he would otherwise have had? and to be obliged to distribute his fortune among those pledges of his dishonour, without feeling for them any sensa-

tions of parental tenderness? If we suppose these philosophers to be materialists, we have then a stronger foundation for opposing their tenets by the gentle dictates of nature, which plead in every breast against the principles of a vain philosophy, and have never yet been controverted by sound reasoning. In short, if the body alone produces cogitation, and sentiment depends entirely on organisation, will there not be a more strict analogy between two beings of the same blood? will they not have a more violent attachment to each other? will there not be a resemblance between their souls as well as their features, which is a most powerful motive to inspire mutual affection?

Is it doing no injury therefore, in your opinion, to destroy or disturb this natural union by the mixture of adulterate blood, and to pervert the principle of that mutual affection which ought to cement all the members of one family? Who would not shudder with horror at the thoughts of having one infant changed for another by a nurse? and is it a less crime to make such a change before the infant is born?

If I consider my own sex in particular, what mischiefs do I not discover in this incontinency, which is supposed to do no injury! The debasement of a guilty woman, who, after the loss of her honour, soon forfeits all other virtues, is alone sufficient. What manifest symptoms convey to a tender husband the intelligence of that injury which they think to justify by secrecy! the loss of the wife's affection is sufficient proof. To what purpose will all her affected endeavours serve, but to manifest her indifference the more!

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Can we impose upon the jealous eye of love by feigned caresses? and what torture must he feel, who is attached to a beloved object, whose hand embraces, while her heart rejects him! Admitting, however, that fortune should favour a conduct which she has so often betrayed; and to say nothing of the rashness of trusting our own affected innocence and another's peace to precautions which Providence often thinks proper to disconcert: yet what deceit, what falsehood, what imposture, is requisite to conceal a criminal commerce, to deceive a husband, to corrupt servants, and to impose upon the public! what a disgrace to the accomplices! what an example to children! what must become of their education amidst so much solicitude how to gratify a guilty passion with impunity? how is the peace of the family and the union of the heads of it to be maintained? What! in all these circumstances does the husband receive no injury? But who can make him recompense for a heart which should have been devoted to him? who can restore him the affections of a valuable woman? who can give him peace of mind, and conjugal confidence? who can cure him of his well-grounded suspicions? who can engage a father to trust the feelings of nature when he embraces his child?

With regard to the pretended connections which may be formed in families by means of adultery and infidelity, it cannot be considered as a serious argument, but rather as an absurd and brutal mockery, which deserves no other answer than disdain and indignation. The treasons, the quarrels, the battles, the murders with
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which this irregularity has in all ages pestered the earth, are sufficient proofs how far the peace and union of mankind is to be promoted by attachments founded in guilt. If any social principle results from this vile and despicable commerce, it may be compared to that which unites a band of robbers, and which ought to be destroyed and annulled in order to insure the safety of lawful communities.

I have endeavoured to suppress the indignation which these principles excited in me, in order to discuss them with greater moderation. The more extravagant and ridiculous I find them, the more I am interested to refute them, in order to make myself ashamed of having listened to them with too little reserve. You see how ill they can endure the test of sound reason; but from whence can we derive the sacred dictates of reason, if not from him who is the source of all? and what shall we think of those who, in order to mislead mankind, pervert this heavenly ray, which he gave them as an unerring guide to virtue? Let us abandon this philosophy of words; let us distrust a fallacious virtue which undermines all other virtues, and attempts to vindicate every vice, to authorise the practice of them all. The surest method of discovering our duty is diligently to examine what is right, and we cannot long continue the examination without recurring to the Author of all goodness. This is what I have done since I have taken pains to rectify my principles; and improve my reason: this is a task you will perform better than I, when you are disposed to pursue the same course. It is a comfort to me
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to reflect, that you have frequently nourished my mind with elevated notions of religion; and you, whose heart disguised nothing from me, would not have talked to me in that strain had your sentiments been different. I recollect with pleasure, that conversations of this kind were ever delightful to us. We never found the presence of the supreme Being troublesome: it rather filled us with hope than terror: it never yet dismayed any but guilty souls; we were pleased to think that he was witness to our interviews, and we loved to exalt our minds to the contemplation of the Deity. If we were sometimes abased by shame, we reflected that at least he was privy to our inmost thoughts, and that idea renewed our tranquillity.

If this confidence led us astray, nevertheless, the principle on which it was founded, is alone capable of reclaiming us to virtue. Is it not unworthy of a man to be always at variance with himself, to have one rule for his actions, another for his opinions; to think as if he was abstracted from matter, to act as if he was devoid of soul, and never to be capable of appropriating a single action of his life to his own entire self? For my own part, I think the principles of the ancients are sufficient to fortify us, when they are not confined to mere speculation. Weakness is incident to human nature, and the merciful Being, who made man frail, will no doubt pardon his frailty; but guilt is a quality which belongs only to the wicked, and will not remain unpunished by the Author of all justice. An infidel, who is otherwise well inclined, practises those virtues he admires; he acts from taste, not from choice.

choice. If all his desires happen to be regular, he indulges them without reserve. He would gratify them in the same manner, if they were irregular; for what should restrain him? But he who acknowledges and worships the common Father of mankind, perceives that he is destined for nobler purposes. An ardent desire to fulfil the end of his being, animates his zeal; he follows a more certain rule of action than appetite; he knows how to do what is right at the expence of his inclinations, and to sacrifice the desires of his heart to the call of duty. Such, my dear friend, is the heroic sacrifice required of us both. The love which attached us would have proved the delight of our lives; it survived hope, it bid defiance to time and absence, it endured every kind of proof. So sincere a passion ought never to have decayed of itself; it was a sacrifice of which virtue alone was worthy.

I must observe farther. All circumstances are altered between us, and your heart must accommodate itself to the change. The wife of Mr Wolmar is not your Julia; your change of sentiment with regard to her is unavoidable; and it depends upon your own choice to make the alteration redound to your honour, according to the election you make of vice or virtue. I recollect a passage in an author, whose authority you will not controvert. "Love (says he) is destitute of its greatest charm, when it is abandoned by honour. To be sensible of its full value, it must warm the heart, and exalt us by raising the object of our desires. Take away the idea of perfection, and you deprive love of all its enthusiasm; banish esteem, and
" love

“ love is no more. How can a woman honour
 “ the man whom she ought to despise? how
 “ can he himself honour her who has not scrupled
 “ to abandon herself to a vile seducer?
 “ Thus they will soon entertain a mutual contempt
 “ for each other. Love, that celestial principle,
 “ will be debased into a shameful commerce
 “ between them. They will have lost
 “ their honour without attaining felicity*.”

This, my dear friend, is our lesson, penned by your own hand: never were our hearts more agreeably attached, and never was honour so dear to us, as in those happy days when this letter was written. Reflect then, how we should be misled at this time by a guilty passion, nourished at the expence of the most agreeable transports which can inspire the soul! The horror of vice, which is so natural to us both, would soon extend to the partner of our guilt: we should entertain mutual hatred, for having loved each other indifferently, and remorse would quickly extinguish affection. Is it not better to refine a generous sentiment, in order to render it permanent? is it not better at least to preserve what we may grant with innocence? is not this preserving what is more delightful than all other enjoyments? Yes, my dear and worthy friend, to keep our love inviolable, we must renounce each other. Let us forget all that has passed, and continue the lover of my soul. This idea is so agreeable that it compensates for every thing.

Thus

* See the first vol. letter XXIV.

Thus have I drawn a faithful picture of my life, and given you a genuine detail of every inward sentiment. Be assured that I love you still. I am still attached to you with such a tender and lively affection, that any other than myself would be alarmed: but I feel a principle of a different kind within me, which secures me against any apprehensions from such an attachment. I perceive that the nature of my affection, is entirely altered; and in this respect, my past failings are the grounds of my present security. I know that scrupulous decorum and the parade of virtue might require more of me, and not be satisfied unless I utterly forgot you. But I think I have a more certain rule of conduct, and will abide by it. I attend to the secret dictates of conscience; I find nothing there which reproaches me, and it never deceives those who sincerely consult it. If this be not sufficient to justify me before the world, it is enough to restore my own mind to tranquillity. How has this happy change been produced? I know not how. All I know is, that I most ardently desired it. God alone has accomplished the rest. I am convinced that a mind once corrupted will ever remain so, and will never recover of itself, unless some sudden revolution, some unexpected change of fortune and condition, entirely alters its connections. When all its habits are destroyed, and all its passions modified, by that thorough revolution, it sometimes resumes its primitive character, and becomes like a new being recently formed by the hands of nature. Then the recollection of its former unworthiness may serve as a preservative against relapse. Yesterday

day we were base and abject, to-day we are spirited and magnanimous. By thus making a close comparison between the two different states, we become more sensible of the value of that which we have recovered, and more attentive to maintain its support.

My marriage has made me experience something like the change I endeavour to explain to you. This tie, which I dreaded so much, has delivered me from a bondage much more dreadful; and my husband becomes dearer to me for having restored me to myself. You and I were, however, too closely attached, for a change of this kind to destroy our union. If you lose an affectionate mistress, you gain a faithful friend; and whatever we may have imagined in our state of delusion, I cannot believe that the alteration is to your prejudice. Let it, I conjure you, encourage you to take the same resolution that I have formed, to become hereafter more wise and virtuous, and to refine the lessons of philosophy, by the precepts of Christian morality. I shall never be thoroughly happy, unless you likewise enjoy happiness; and I am more convinced than ever, that there is no real felicity without virtue. If you sincerely love me, afford me the agreeable consolation to find that our hearts correspond in their return to virtue, as they unhappily agreed in their deviation from it.

I need not make any apology for the length of this epistle. Were you less dear to me, I should have shortened it. Before I conclude, I have one favour to request of you. A cruel burden weighs upon my heart. Mr Wolmar is a stranger to my past conduct; but an unreserved sin-

cerity is part of the duty I owe to him: I should have made the confession a hundred times; you alone have restrained me. Though I am acquainted with Mr Wolmar's discretion and moderation, yet to mention your name is always to bring you in competition, and I would not do it without your consent. Can this request be disagreeable to you? and when I flatter myself to obtain your leave, do I depend too much on you or on myself? Consider, I beseech you, that this reserve is inconsistent with innocence; that it grows every day more insupportable; and that till I receive your answer, I shall not enjoy a moment's peace.

L E T T E R CXII.

To JULIA.

AND wilt thou then no longer be my Julia? Ah! do not say so, thou worthiest of thy sex! Thou art more mine than ever. The whole world owes homage to thy merit. It was thee whom I adored, when I first became susceptible of the impressions of beauty; and I shall never cease to adore thee even after death, if my soul still retains any recollection of those truly celestial charms which were my supreme delight when living. The courageous effort, by which you have recovered all your virtue, renders you more equal to your lovely self. No, no, whatever torment the sensation and the confession give me, yet I must declare, that you never were my Julia more perfectly than at this moment in which you renounce me. Alas! I regain

gain my Julia, by losing her for ever. But I, whose heart shudders even at an attempt to imitate your virtue; I, who am tormented with a criminal passion, which I can neither support nor subdue; am I the man I vainly imagined myself to be? was I worthy of your esteem? what right had I to importune you with my complaints and my despair? did it become me to presume to sigh for you? Ah, what was I, that I should dare to love the incomparable Julia!

Fool that I am! as though I did not feel myself sufficiently humbled, without taking pains to seek fresh circumstances of humiliation! Why should I increase my mortification by enumerating distinctions unknown to love? it was that which exalted me; and which made me your equal. Our hearts were blended, we shared our sentiments in common, and mine partook of the elevation of yours. Behold me now sunk into my pristine baseness! Thou gentle hope, which didst so long feed my soul to deceive me, art thou then extinguished, never to return? will she not be mine? must I lose her for ever? does she make another happy?—O rage! O torments of hell!—O faithless! ought you ever?—pardon me, pardon me, dearest madam! have pity on my distraction! O you had too much reason when you told me, she is no more—she is indeed no more that affectionate Julia to whom I could disclose every emotion of my heart. How could I complain when I found myself unhappy? could she listen to my complaints? was I unhappy?—what then am I now? No, I will not make you blush for yourself or me. Hope is no more, we must renounce

each other; we must part. Virtue herself has pronounced the decree, and your hand has been capable of transcribing it. Let us forget each other——Forget me, at least. I am determined, I swear, that I will never speak to you of myself again.

May I yet venture to talk of you, and to interest myself in what is now the only object of my concern; I mean, your happiness? In describing to me the state of your mind, you say nothing of your present situation. As a reward of the sacrifice I have made, of which you ought to be sensible, at least deign to deliver me from this insupportable doubt. Julia, are you happy? If you are, give me the only comfort of which my despair is susceptible: if you are not, be compassionate enough to tell me so; my misery then will be of less duration.

The more I reflect on the confession you propose to make, the less I am inclined to consent to it; and the same motive which always deprived me of resolution to deny your requests, renders me inexorable in this particular. It is a subject of the last importance, and I beseech you to weigh my reasons with attention. First, your excessive delicacy seems to lead you into a mistake, and I do not see on what foundation the most rigid virtue can exact such a confession from you. No engagement whatever can have any retro-active effect. We cannot bind ourselves with respect to time past, nor promise what is not in our power to perform: how can you be obliged to give your husband an account of the use you formerly made of your liberty, or be responsible to him for a fidelity which you
never

never promised to him? Do not deceive yourself, Julia; it is not to your husband, it is to your friend, that you have violated your engagement. Before we were separated by your father's tyranny, heaven and nature had formed us for each other. By entering into other connections you have been guilty of a crime which love and honour can never forgive, and it is I who have a right to reclaim the prize which Mr Wolmar has ravished from me.

If, under any circumstances duty can exact such a confession, it is when the danger of a relapse obliges a prudent woman to take precautions for her security. But your letter has given me more light into your real sentiments than you imagine. In reading it, I felt in my own heart how much yours, upon a near approach, nay, even in the bosom of love, would have abhorred a criminal connection, the horror of which was only diminished by its distance.

As duty and honour doth not require such confidence, prudence and reason forbid it; for it is running a needless risque of forfeiting every thing that is dear in wedlock, the attachment of a husband, mutual confidence, and the peace of the family. Have you thoroughly weighed the consequences of such a step? are you sufficiently acquainted with your husband, to be certain of the effect it will produce in his disposition? do you know how many men there are, in whom such a confession would produce an immoderate jealousy and an invincible contempt, and whom it might even instigate to attempt your life? In such a nice examination,

we ought to attend to time, place, and the difference of characters. In the country where I reside at present, such a confidence would be attended with no danger ; and they who make so light of conjugal fidelity, are not people to be violently affected by any frailty of conduct prior to the engagement. Not to mention reasons which sometimes render those confessions indispensable, and which cannot be applied to your case, I know some women of tolerable estimation, who, with very little risque, have made a merit of that kind of sincerity, in order perhaps to obtain by that sacrifice a confidence which they might afterwards abuse at will. But in those countries where the sanctity of marriage is more respected, in those countries where that sacred tie forms a solid union, and where husbands have a real attachment to their wives, they require a more severe account of their conduct : they expect that their hearts should never have felt any tender affections but for themselves ; usurping a right which they have not, they unreasonably expect their wives to have been theirs even before they belonged to them, and they are as unwilling to excuse an abuse of liberty as a real infidelity.

Believe me, virtuous Julia, and distrust a zeal so fruitless and unnecessary. Keep this dangerous secret, which nothing can oblige you to reveal ; the discovery of which might utterly ruin you, without being of any advantage to your husband. If he is worthy of such a confession, it will disturb his peace of mind, and you will have afflicted him without reason ; if he is unworthy, why will you give him a pretence

tence for using you ill? How do you know whether your virtue, which has defended you from the assaults of your heart, will likewise support you against the influence of domestic troubles daily reviving? Do not voluntarily increase your misfortunes, lest they become too powerful for your resistance, and you should at length relapse by means of your scruples into a worse condition than that from which you have with so much difficulty disengaged yourself. Prudence is the basis of every virtue; consult that, I intreat you, in this most important crisis of your life; and if the fatal secret oppresses you so violently, wait at least, before you unbosom yourself, till time and a length of years shall have made you more perfectly acquainted with your husband: stay till his heart, now affected by the powers of your beauty, shall be susceptible of those more lasting impressions, which the charms of your disposition cannot fail to make, and till he is become habitually sensible of your perfections. After all, if these reasons, powerful as they are, should not convince you, yet do not refuse to listen to the voice which utters them. O Julia! hearken to a man, who is yet, in some degree, susceptible of virtue, and who has a right to expect some concession from you, at least, in return for the sacrifice he has made to you to-day.

I must conclude this letter. I find that I cannot forbear resuming a strain to which you must no longer give ear. Julia, I must part with you! young as I am, am I already destined to renounce felicity? O time, never to be recalled! time irrevocably past! source of everlasting

ing sorrows! pleasures, transports, delightful ecstasies, delicious moments, celestial raptures! my love, my only love, the honour and delight of my soul! farewell for ever!

L E T T E R CXIII.

From JULIA.

YOU ask me, whether I am happy? The question affects me; and by your manner of asking it, you facilitate my answer; for so far from wishing to banish you from my memory as you desire me, I confess that I should not be happy was your affection for me to cease: yet at present I am happy in most respects, and nothing but your felicity is wanting to complete mine. If I avoided making any mention of Mr Wolmar in my last, it was out of tenderness to you. I was too well acquainted with your sensibility of temper, not to be under apprehensions of irritating your pain; but your solicitude with regard to my felicity obliging me to mention him on whom it depends, I cannot speak of him without doing justice to his worth, as becomes his wife, and a friend to truth.

Mr Wolmar is near fifty years of age: but by means of an uniform regular course of life, and a serenity not ruffled by any violent passions, he has preserved such a healthy constitution, and such a florid complexion, that he scarce appears to be forty; and he bears no symptoms of age, but prudence and experience. His countenance
is

is noble and engaging, his address open and unaffected, his manner rather sincere than courteous, he speaks little and with great judgment, but without any affectation of being concise and sententious. His behaviour is the same to every one, he neither courts nor shuns any individual, and he never gives any preference but what reason justifies.

In spite of his natural indifference, his heart, seconding my father's inclinations, entertained a liking for me, and for the first time formed a tender attachment. This moderate and lasting affection has been governed by such strict rules of decorum, and observed such a constant uniformity, that he was under no necessity of altering his manners on changing his condition, and, without violating conjugal decorum, his behaviour to me now is the same as it was before marriage. I never saw him either gay or melancholy, but always contented; he never talks to me of himself; and seldom of me; he is not in continual search after me, but he does not seem displeased that I should seek his company, and he seems to part from me unwillingly. He is serious, without disposing others to be grave; on the contrary, his serenity of manners seems an invitation to me to be sprightly; and as the pleasures I relish are the only pleasures of which he is susceptible, an endeavour to amuse myself is among the duties I owe to him. In one word, he wishes to see me happy; he has not told me so, but his conduct declares it; and to wish the happiness of a wife, is to make her really happy.

With all the attention with which I have been
able

able to observe him, I cannot discover any particular passion to which he is attached, except his affection for me : it is however so even and temperate, that one would conclude he had power to limit the degree of his passion, and that he had determined not to love beyond the bounds of discretion. He is in reality what Lord B—— imagines himself to be. In this respect I find him greatly preferable to those passionate lovers of whom we are so fond : for the heart deceives us a thousand ways, and acts from a suspicious principle ; but reason always proposes a just end ; the rules of duty which it enjoins are sure, evident, and practicable ; and whenever our reason is led astray, we enter into idle speculations, which were never intended to be objects of her examination.

The chief delight of Mr Wolmar, is observation. He loves to judge of mens characters and actions. He generally forms his judgment with great impartiality and profound penetration. If an enemy were to do him an injury, he would discuss every motive and expedient with as much composure as if he was transacting any indifferent concern. I do not know by what means he has heard of you ; but he has often spoken of you with great esteem to me, and I am sure he is incapable of disguise. I have imagined sometimes that he took particular notice of me during these conversations ; but in all probability, the observation I apprehended was nothing but the secret reproach of an alarmed conscience. However it be, in this respect I did my duty : neither fear nor shame occasioned

casioned me to shew an unjust reserve; and I did you justice before him, as I now do him justice before you.

I forgot to inform you of our income, and the management of it. The wreck of Mr Wolmar's inheritance, with the addition from my father, who has only reserved a pension for himself, makes up a handsome and moderate fortune, which Mr Wolmar uses with generosity and discretion, by maintaining in his family not an inconvenient and vain display of luxury, but plenty, with the real conveniences of life; and by distributing necessities among his indigent neighbours. The œconomy he has established in his household, is the image of that order which reigns in his own breast; and his little family seems to be a model of that regularity which is observable in the government of the world. You neither discover that inflexible formality which is rather inconvenient than useful, and which no one but he who exacts it can endure; nor do you perceive that mistaken confusion, which, by being incumbered with superfluities, renders every thing useless. The master's hand is seen throughout, without being felt; and he made his first arrangement with so much discretion, that every thing now goes on by itself; and regularity is preserved, without any abridgment of liberty.

This, my worthy friend, is a succinct but faithful account of Mr Wolmar's character, as far as I have been able to discover it since I lived with him. Such as he appeared to me the first day, such he seemed the last, without any alteration; which induces me to hope that I know
him

him thoroughly, and that I have no farther discoveries to make; for I cannot conceive any change in his behaviour which will not be to his disadvantage.

From this account, you may anticipate the answer to your question; and you must think despicably of me not to suppose me happy, when I have so much reason to be so. What led me into a mistake, and what perhaps still misleads you, is the opinion, that love is necessary to make the married state happy. My good friend, this is a vulgar error; honour, virtue, a certain conformity, not so much of age and condition, as of temper and inclination, are the requisites in the conjugal state: nevertheless, it must not be inferred from hence, that this union does not produce an affectionate attachment, which, though it does not amount to love, is not less agreeable, and is much more permanent. Love is attended with a continual inquietude of jealousy, or the dread of separation, by no means suitable with a married life, which should be a state of peace and tranquillity. The intent of matrimony is not for man and wife to be always taken up with each other; but jointly to discharge the duties of civil society, to govern their family with prudence, and educate their children with discretion. Lovers attend to nothing but each other; they are incessantly engaged with each other; and all that they regard, is how to shew their mutual affection. But this is not enough for a married pair, who have so many other objects to engage their attention. There is no passion whatever which exposes us to such delusion as that of love. We take its violence

violence for a symptom of its duration ; the heart, over-burdened with such an agreeable sensation, extends itself to futurity ; and while the heat of love continues, we flatter ourselves that it is never to cool. But, on the contrary, it is consumed by its own ardour ; it glows in youth, it grows faint with decaying beauty, it is utterly extinguished by the frost of age ; and since the beginning of the world, there never was an instance of two lovers who sighed for each other when they became grey-headed. We may be assured, that, sooner or later, adoration will cease ; then the idol which we worshipped being demolished, we reciprocally see each other in a true light. We look with surprise for the object on which we doated. Not being able to discover it more, we are displeased with that which remains in its stead, and which our imagination often disfigures, as much as it embellished it before. “ There are few people (says Rochefoucault) who are not ashamed of having “ loved each other when their affection is extinguished.” How much is it to be dreaded therefore, lest these too lively sensations should be succeeded by an irksome state of mind ; lest their decline, instead of stopping at indifference, should even reach absolute disgust ; lest, in short, being entirely satiated, they, who were too passionately fond of each other as lovers, should come to hate each other as husband and wife ! My dear friend, you always appeared amiable in my eyes, too fatally so for my innocence and repose ; but I never yet saw you but in the character of a lover, and how do I know in what light you would have appeared when your pas-

sion was no more? I must confess, that when love expired, it would still have left you in possession of virtue; but is that alone sufficient to make an union happy? which the heart ought to cement? and how many virtuous men have made intolerable husbands? In all these respects you may say the same of me.

As to Mr Wolmar, no delusion is the foundation of our mutual liking; we see each other in a true light; the sentiment which unites us is not the blind transport of passionate desire, but a constant and invariable attachment between two rational people, who being destined to pass the remainder of their lives together, are content with their lot, and endeavour to make themselves mutually agreeable. It seems as if we could not have suited each other better, had we been formed on purpose for our union. If he had had a heart as tender as mine, it is impossible but so much sensibility on each side must sometimes have clashed, and given rise to disagreements. If I was as composed as he, there would subsist too much indifference between us, which would render our union less pleasing and agreeable. If he did not love me, we should be uneasy together; if his love for me was too passionate, he would be troublesome to me. Each of us is exactly made for the other: he instructs me, I enliven him: the value of both is increased by our union, and we seem destined to form but one soul between us; to which he gives intelligence, and I direct the will. Even his advanced age redounds to our common advantage; for with the passion which agitated me, it is certain, that had he been younger, I should have married him

him with more unwillingness, and that extreme reluctance would probably have prevented the happy revolution which my mind has undergone.

My worthy friend, heaven directs the good intention of parents, and rewards the docility of children. God forbid that I should wish to insult your affliction. Nothing but a strong desire of giving you the firmest assurance with respect to my present condition, could induce me to add what I am going to mention. If, with the sentiments I formerly entertained for you, and the knowledge I have since acquired, I was once more free, and mistress of my choice, I call that Being, who has vouchsafed to enlighten me, and who reads the bottom of my heart, to witness my sincerity, when I declare, that that choice should fall, not on you, but on Mr Wolmar.

It may perhaps be necessary, in order to complete your cure, that I should inform you of what farther remains in my mind. Mr Wolmar is much older than I am. If, to punish me for my faults, heaven should deprive me of a worthy husband whom I have so little deserved, it is my firm resolution never to espouse another. If he has not had the good fortune to meet with a chaste virgin, at least he will leave behind him a continent widow. You know me too well, to imagine, that, after I have made this declaration, I shall ever recede from it.

What I have said to remove your doubts, may, in some measure, serve to resolve your objections against the confession which I think it

my duty to make to my husband. He is too discreet to punish me for a mortifying step which repentance alone may atone for; and I am not more incapable of the artifice common to the women you speak of, than he is of harbouring such a suspicion. With respect to the reason you assign why such a confession is needless, it is certainly sophistical; for, though we can be under no obligation to a husband, as such, before marriage, yet that does not authorise one to pass upon him for what one really is not. I perceived this before I married him; and tho' the oath which my father extorted from me prevented me from discharging my duty in this respect, I am not the less blameable, since it is a crime to take an unjust oath, and a farther crime to keep it. But I had another reason, which my heart dared not avow, and which made me still more guilty. Thank heaven, that reason subsists no longer.

A consideration more just, and of greater weight with me, is the danger of unnecessarily disturbing the repose of a worthy man, who derives his happiness from the esteem he bears to his wife. It certainly is not now in his power to break the tie which binds us together, nor in mine to have been more worthy of his choice. Therefore, by an indiscreet confidence, I run the risque of afflicting him without any advantage, and without reaping any other benefit from my sincerity, than that of disburdening my mind of a cruel secret which heavily oppresses me. I am sensible that I shall be more composed when I have made the discovery; but perhaps he would be less happy, and it would be a bad method of
making

making reparation for my faults, to prefer my own tranquillity to his.

What then shall I do in this dilemma? Till heaven shall better instruct me in my duty, I will follow your friendly advice; I will be silent; conceal my failings from my husband, and endeavour to repair them by a conduct, which may one day render me worthy of his pardon.

To begin this necessary reformation, you must consent, my dear friend, that from this time all correspondence between us shall cease. If Mr Wolmar had received my confession, he might have determined how far we ought to gratify the sensations of friendship, and give innocent proofs of our mutual attachment; but since I dare not consult him in this particular, I have learned to my cost how far habits, the most justifiable in appearance, are capable of leading us astray. It is time to grow discreet. Notwithstanding I think my heart securely fortified, yet I will no longer venture to be judge in my own cause, nor, now I am a wife, will I give way to the same presumption which betrayed me when I was a maid. This is the last letter you will ever receive from me. I intreat you never to write to me again. Nevertheless, as I shall always continue to interest myself with the most tender concern for your welfare, and as my sentiment in this respect is as pure as the light, I should be glad to hear of you occasionally, and to find you in possession of that happiness you deserve. You may write to Mrs Orbe from time to time, when you have any thing interesting to communicate. I hope that the integrity of your

soul will be expressed in your letters. Besides, my cousin is too virtuous and discreet to shew me any part which is not fit for my perusal, and would not fail to suppress the correspondence if you were capable of abusing it.

Adieu, my dear and worthy friend. If I thought that fortune could make you happy, I should desire you to go in pursuit of her; but perhaps you have reason to despise her, being master of such accomplishments as will enable you to thrive without her assistance. I would rather desire you to seek after happiness, which is the fortune of the wise. We have ever experienced that there is no felicity without virtue: but examine carefully whether the word virtue, taken in too abstracted a sense, has not more pomp than solidity in it; and whether it is not a term of parade, more calculated to dazzle others, than to satisfy ourselves. I shudder when I reflect, that they who secretly meditated adultery, should dare to talk of virtue! Do you know in what sense we understood this respectable epithet, which we abused while we were engaged in a criminal commerce? it was the impetuous passion with which we were mutually inflamed, that disguised its transports under this sacred enthusiasm, in order to render them more dear to us, and to hold us longer in delusion. We were formed, I dare believe, to practise and cherish real virtue; but we were misguided in our pursuit, and we pursued a phantom. It is now time for this delusion to cease; it is time to return to wisdom's paths, from which we have wandered too long. Nor will this return, my dear friend, be so difficult as you conceive. You have

have a guide within yourself, whose directions you have disregarded, but never entirely rejected. Your mind is sound, it is attached to what is right; and if just principles sometimes forsake you, it is because you do not use your utmost efforts to maintain them. Examine your conscience thoroughly; see whether you will not discover some neglected principle, which might have served to put your actions under better regulations, to have made them more consistent with each other, and with one common object. Believe me, it is not enough that virtue is the basis of your conduct, unless that basis itself is fixed on a firm foundation. Call to your mind those Indians, who imagine the world is supported by a great elephant, that elephant by a tortoise, and when you ask them on what the tortoise rests, they can answer you no farther.

I conjure you to regard the remonstrances of friendship, and to chuse a more certain road to happiness than that which has so long misguided us. I shall incessantly pray to heaven to grant us pure felicity, and I shall never be satisfied till we both enjoy it. And, if our hearts, in spite of our endeavours, recal the errors of our youth, let the reformation they produced at least warrant the recollection, that we may say, with the ancient philosopher—"Alas! we should have perished, if we had not been undone."

Here ends the tedious sermon I have preached to you. I shall have enough to do hereafter to preach to myself. Farewell, my amiable friend, farewell for ever! so inflexible duty decrees: but be assured that the heart of Julia can
never

never forget what was so dear to her — my God! what am I doing? the blotted paper will inform you. Ah! is it not excusable to dissolve in tenderness, when we bid a friend the last farewell?



LETTER CXIV.

To Lord B——.

YES, my Lord, I confess it; my soul is oppressed with the weight of life. I have long endured it as a burden; I have lost every thing which could make it dear to me, and nothing but disquietude remains.

I am told, however, that I am not at liberty to dispose of my life, without the permission of that Being from whom I received it. I am sensible likewise that you have a right over it by more titles than one. Your care has twice preserved it, and your goodness is its constant security. I will never dispose of it, till I am satisfied that I may do it without a crime, and till I have not the least hope of employing it for you.

You told me that I should be of use to you; why did you deceive me? Since we have been in London, so far from thinking of employing me in your concerns, you have been kind enough to make me your only concern. How superfluous is your obliging solicitude! My Lord, you know I abhor a crime, even worse than I detest life; I adore the supreme Being; I owe every thing to you, I have an affection for you, you are the only person on earth to whom I am attached.

tached. Friendship and duty may chain a wretch to this earth ; sophistry and vain pretences will never detain him. Enlighten my understanding, speak to my heart ; I am ready to hear you ; but remember, that despair is not to be imposed upon.

You would have me apply to the test of reason : I will ; let us reason. You desire me to deliberate in proportion to the importance of the question in debate ; I agree to it. Let us investigate truth with temper and moderation. Let us discuss this general proposition with the same indifference we would treat any other. Robeck wrote an apology for suicide before he put an end to his life. I will not, after his example, write a book on the subject, neither am I well satisfied with that which he has penned ; but I hope, in this discussion, at least to imitate his moderation.

I have for a long time meditated on this awful subject. You must be sensible of this ; for you know my destiny, and yet I am alive. The more I reflect, the more I am convinced that the question may be reduced to this fundamental proposition. Every man has a right by nature to pursue what he thinks good, and avoid what he thinks evil, in all respects which are not injurious to others. When our life therefore becomes a misery to ourselves, and is not of advantage to any one, we are at liberty to rid ourselves of it. If there is any such thing as a clear and self-evident principle, I think this is one ; and if this be subverted, there is scarce an action in life which may not be made a crime.

What say the philosophers on this subject ?

First,

First, they consider life as something which is not our own, because we hold it as a gift. But because it has been given to us, is it not for that very reason our own? Has not God given these sophists two arms? Nevertheless, when they are under apprehensions of a mortification, they do not scruple to amputate one, or both if there be occasion. By a parity of reasoning, we may convince those who believe in the immortality of the soul; for if I sacrifice my arm to the preservation of something more precious, which is my body, I have the same right to sacrifice my body to the preservation of something more valuable, which is the happiness of my existence. If all the gifts which heaven has bestowed are naturally designed for our good, they are certainly too apt to change their nature; and we are endowed with reason, that we may discern the difference. If this rule did not authorise us to chuse the one and reject the other, of what use would it be among mankind?

This objection, so weak, is turned by them into a thousand shapes. They consider a man living upon earth, as a soldier placed on duty. "God (say they) has fixed you in this world, why do you quit your station without his leave." But you, who argue thus, has he not stationed you in the town where you was born, why therefore do you quit it without his leave? is not misery, of itself, a sufficient permission? whatever station Providence has assigned me, whether it be in a regiment, or on the earth at large, he intended me to stay there while I found my situation agreeable, and to leave it when it became intolerable. This is the voice
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of nature, and the voice of God. I agree that we must wait for an order; but when I die a natural death, God does not order me to quit life, he takes it from me: it is by rendering life insupportable, that he orders me to quit it. In the first case, I resist with all my force; in the second, I have the merit of obedience.

Can you conceive that there are some people so absurd as to arraign suicide as a kind of rebellion against Providence, by an attempt to fly from his laws? But we do not put an end to our being, in order to withdraw ourselves from his commands, but to execute them. What! does the power of God extend no farther than to my body: is there a spot in the universe, is there any being in the universe which is not subject to his power? and will that power have less immediate influence over me, when my being is refined, and thereby becomes less compound, and of nearer resemblance to the divine essence? No, his justice and goodness are the foundation of my hopes; and if I thought that death would withdraw me from his power, I would no longer wish to die.

This is one of the quibbles of the Phædo, which, in other respects, abounds with sublime truths. "If your slave destroys himself (says Socrates to Cebes,) would you not punish him, were it possible, for having unjustly deprived you of your property." But, good Socrates, do we not belong to God after we are dead? The case you put is not applicable; you ought to argue thus: "If you incumber your slave with a habit which confines him from discharging his duty properly, will you punish
" nish

“ nish him for quitting it in order to render
 “ you better service ?” The grand error lies in
 making life of too much importance ; as if our
 existence depended upon it, and that death was
 a total annihilation. Our life is of no conse-
 quence in the sight of God ; it is of no import-
 ance in the eyes of reason, neither ought it to
 be of any in our sight ; and when we quit our
 body, we only lay aside an inconvenient habit.
 Is this circumstance so painful, to be the occa-
 sion of so much disturbance ? my Lord, these
 declaimers are not in earnest. Their argu-
 ments are absurd and cruel, for they aggravate
 the supposed crime as if it put a period to exist-
 ence, and they punish it as if that existence was
 eternal.

As to Plato's *Phædo*, which has furnished
 them with the only specious argument that has
 ever been advanced, the question is discussed
 there in a very light and desultory manner. So-
 crates being condemned, by an unjust judg-
 ment, to lose his life in a few hours, had no
 occasion to enter into an accurate inquiry
 whether he was at liberty to dispose of it him-
 self. Supposing him really to have been the
 author of those discourses which Plato ascribes
 to him, yet believe me, my Lord, he would
 have meditated with more attention on the sub-
 ject, had he been in circumstances which re-
 quired him to reduce his speculations to practice ;
 and a strong proof that no valid objection can
 be drawn from that immortal work against the
 right of disposing of our own lives, is, that Cato
 read it twice thro' the very night that he destroy-
 ed himself.

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The same sophisters make it a question whether life can ever be an evil? But when we consider the multitude of errors, torments, and vices with which it abounds, one would rather be inclined to doubt whether it can ever be a blessing. Guilt incessantly besieges the most virtuous of mankind. Every moment he lives, he is in danger of falling a prey to the wicked, or of being wicked himself. To struggle, and to endure, is his lot in this world; that of the dishonest man is to do evil, and to suffer. In every other particular they differ, and have nothing in common except the miseries of life. If you required authorities and facts, I could cite you the oracles of old, the answers of the sages, and produce instances where acts of virtue were recompensed with death. But let us leave these considerations, my Lord; it is to you whom I address myself, and I ask you what is the chief attention of a wise man in this life, except, if I may be allowed the expression, to collect himself inwardly, and endeavour, even while he lives, to be dead to every object of sense? The only way by which wisdom directs us to avoid the miseries of human nature, is it not to detach ourselves from all earthly objects, from every thing that is gross in our composition, to retire within ourselves, and to raise our thoughts to sublime contemplations? If therefore our passions and our errors are the source of our misfortunes, with what eagerness should we wish for a state which will deliver us both from the one and the other? What is the fate of those sons of sensuality, who indiscreetly multiply their torments by their pleasures? They in fact

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destroy their existence, by extending their connections in this life; they increase the weight of their chains by their numerous attachments; they relish no enjoyments but what are succeeded by a thousand bitter wants; the more lively their sensibility, the more acute their sufferings; the stronger they are attached to life, the more wretched they become.

But admitting it, in general, a benefit to mankind to crawl upon the earth with gloomy sadness, I do not pretend to intimate that the human race ought with one common consent to destroy themselves, and make the world one immense grave. But there are miserable beings, who are too much exalted to be governed by vulgar opinion; to them, despair and grievous torments are the passports of nature. It would be as ridiculous to suppose that life can be a blessing to such men, as it was absurd in the sophister Possidonium to deny that it was an evil, at the same time that he endured all the torments of the gout. While life is agreeable to us, we earnestly wish to prolong it; and nothing but a sense of extreme misery can extinguish the desire of existence; for we naturally conceive a violent dread of death, and this dread conceals from our sight the miseries of human nature. We drag a painful and melancholy life, for a long time before we can resolve to quit it; but when once life becomes so insupportable as to overcome the horror of death, then existence is evidently a great evil, and we cannot disengage ourselves from it too soon. Therefore, though we cannot exactly ascertain the point at which it ceases to be a blessing, yet
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at least we are certain that it is an evil long before it appears to be such, and with every sensible man the right of quitting life is by a great deal precedent to the temptation.

This is not all. After they have denied that life can be an evil, in order to bar our right of making away with ourselves; they confess immediately afterwards that it is an evil, by reproaching us with want of courage to support it. According to them, it is cowardice to withdraw ourselves from pain and trouble, and there are none but dastards who destroy themselves. O Rome, thou victrix of the world, what a race of cowards did thy empire produce! let Arria, Eponina, Lucretia, be of the number; they were women. But Brutus, Cassius, and thou great and divine Cato, who didst share with the gods the adoration of an astonished world, thou whose sacred and august presence animated the Romans with holy zeal, and made tyrants tremble, little did thy proud admirers imagine that paltry rhetoricians, immured in the dusty corner of a college, would ever attempt to prove that thou wert a coward, for having preferred death to a shameful existence. O the dignity and energy of your modern writers! how sublime, how intrepid are you with your pens? But tell me, thou great and valiant hero, who dost so courageously decline the battle, in order to endure the pain of living somewhat longer; when a spark of fire lights upon your hand, why do you withdraw it in such haste? How! are you such a coward that you dare not bear the scorching of fire? Nothing, you, say, can oblige you to endure the burning spark; and

what obliges me to endure life? Was the creation of a man of more difficulty to Providence, than that of a straw? and is not both one and the other equally his work?

Without doubt, it is an evidence of great fortitude to bear with firmness the misery which we cannot shun; none but a fool, however, will voluntarily endure evils which he can avoid without a crime; and it is very often a great crime to suffer pain unnecessarily. He who has not resolution to deliver himself from a miserable being by a speedy death, is like one who would rather suffer a wound to mortify, than trust to the surgeon's knife for his cure. Come, thou worthy——cut off this leg, which endangers my life. I will see it done without shrinking, and will give that hero leave to call me coward, who suffers his leg to mortify, because he dares not undergo the same operation.

I acknowledge that there are duties owing to others, the nature of which will not allow every man to dispose of his life; but in return, how many are there which give him a right to dispose of it? Let a magistrate on whom the welfare of a nation depends, let a father of a family who is bound to procure subsistence for his children, let a debtor who might ruin his creditors, let these at all events discharge their duty; admitting a thousand other civil and domestic relations to oblige an honest and unfortunate man to support the misery of life, to avoid the greater evil of doing injustice; is it therefore, under circumstances totally different, incumbent on us to preserve a life oppressed with a swarm of miseries, when it can be of no service but

but to him who has not courage to die! "Kill me, my child," says the decrepid savage to his son, who carries him on his shoulders, and bends under his weight; "the enemy is at hand; go to battle with thy brethren, go and preserve thy children, and do not suffer thy helpless father to fall alive into the hands of those whose relations he has mangled." Though hunger, sickness, and poverty, those domestic plagues, more dreadful than savage enemies, may allow a wretched cripple to consume, in a sick bed, the provisions of a family which can scarce subsist itself; yet he who has no connections, whom heaven has reduced to the necessity of living alone, whose wretched existence can be productive of good to no one, why should not he, at least, have the right of quitting a station where his complaints are troublesome, and his sufferings of no utility?

Weigh these considerations, my Lord; collect these arguments, and you will find that they may be reduced to the most simple of nature's rights, of which no man of sense yet ever entertained a doubt. In fact, why should we be allowed to cure ourselves of the gout, and not to get rid of the misery of life? do not both evils proceed from the same hand? To what purpose is it to say, that death is painful? Are drugs agreeable to be taken? No, nature revolts against both. Let them prove therefore that it is more justifiable to cure a transient disorder by the application of remedies, than to free ourselves from an incurable evil by putting an end to life; and let them shew how it can be less criminal to use the bark for a fever, than to

take opium for the stone. If we consider the object in view, it is in both cases to free ourselves from painful sensations ; if we regard the means, both one and the other are equally natural ; if we consider the repugnance of our nature, it operates equally on both sides ; if we attend to the will of Providence, can we struggle against any evil of which it is not the author ? can we deliver ourselves from any torment which the hand of God has not inflicted ? what are the bounds which limit his power, and when is resistance lawful ? Are we then to make no alteration in the condition of things, because every thing is in the state he appointed ? must we do nothing in this life for fear of infringing his laws, or is it in our power to break them if we would ? No, my Lord, the occupation of man is more great and noble. God did not give him life that he should supinely remain in a state of constant inactivity. But he gave him freedom to act, conscience to will, and reason to chuse what is good. He has constituted him sole judge of all his actions. He has engraved this precept in his heart, Do whatever you conceive to be for your own good, provided you thereby do no injury to others. If my sensations tell me that death is eligible, I resist his orders by an obstinate resolution to live ; for, by making death desirable, he directs me to embrace it.

My Lord, I appeal to your wisdom and candour ; what more infallible maxims can reason deduce from religion, with respect to suicide ? If Christians have adopted contrary tenets, they are neither drawn from the principles of religion,

on, nor from the only sure guide the Scriptures, but borrowed from the pagan philosophers. Lactantius and Augustine, the first who propagated this new doctrine, of which Jesus Christ and his apostles take no notice, ground their arguments entirely on the reasoning of Phædo, which I have already controverted; so that the believers, who, in this respect, think they are supported by the authority of the gospel, are in fact only countenanced by the authority of Plato. In truth, where do we find throughout the whole Bible any law against suicide, or so much as a bare disapprobation of it; and is it not very unaccountable, that among the instances produced of persons who devoted themselves to death, we do not find the least word of improbation against examples of this kind? Nay, what is more, the instance of Samson's voluntary death is authorised by a miracle, by which he revenges himself of his enemies. Would this miracle have been displayed to justify a crime; and would this man who lost his strength, by suffering himself to be seduced by the allurements of a woman, have recovered it to commit an authorised crime, as if God himself would practise deceit on his creatures?

“Thou shalt do no murder,” says the decalogue. What are we to infer from this? If this commandment is to be taken literally, we must not destroy malefactors, nor our enemies: and Moses, who put so many people to death, was a bad interpreter of his own precept. If there are any exceptions, certainly the first must be in favour of suicide; because it is exempt from any degree of violence and injustice, the two
only

only circumstances which can make homicide criminal; and because nature, moreover, has in this respect thrown sufficient obstacles in the way.

But still, they tell us, we must patiently endure the evils which God inflicts, and make a merit of our sufferings. This application however of the maxims of Christianity is very ill calculated to satisfy our judgment. Man is subject to a thousand troubles, his life is a complication of evils, and he seems to have been born only to suffer. Reason directs him to shun as many of these evils as he can avoid; and religion, which is never in contradiction to reason, approves of his endeavours. But how inconsiderable is the account of these evils, in comparison with those he is obliged to endure against his will? It is with respect to these, that a merciful God allows man to claim the merit of resistance; he receives the tribute he has been pleased to impose, as a voluntary homage, and he places our resignation in this life to our profit in the next. True repentance is derived from nature: if man endures patiently whatever he is obliged to suffer, he does, in this respect, all that God requires of him; and if any one is so inflated with pride, as to attempt more, he is a madman who ought to be confined, or an impostor who ought to be punished. Let us therefore, without scruple, fly from all the evils we can avoid; there will still be too many left for us to endure. Let us, without remorse, quit life itself when it becomes a torment to us, since it is in our own power to do it, and that in so doing we neither offend God nor man. If we would

would offer a sacrifice to the supreme Being, is it nothing to undergo death? Let us devote to God that which he demands by the voice of reason, and into his hands let us peaceably surrender our souls.

Such are the liberal precepts which good sense dictates to every man, and which religion authorises *. Let us apply these precepts to ourselves. You have condescended to disclose your mind to me; I am acquainted with your uneasiness; you do not endure less than myself; your troubles, like mine, are incurable; and they are the more so, as the laws of honour are more immutable than those of fortune. You bear them, I must confess, with fortitude. Virtue supports you; advance but one step farther, and she disengages you. You intreat me to suffer; my Lord, I dare importune you to

* A strange letter this for the discussion of such a subject! Do men argue so coolly on a question of this nature, when they examine it on their own accounts? Is the letter a forgery, or does the author reason only with an intent to be refuted? What makes our opinion in this particular dubious, is the example of Robeck, which he cites, and which seems to warrant his own. Robeck deliberated so gravely, that he had patience to write a book, a large, voluminous, weighty, and dispassionate book; and when he had concluded, according to his principles, that it was lawful to put an end to our being, he destroyed himself with the same composure that he wrote. Let us beware of the prejudices of the times, and of particular countries. When suicide is out of fashion we conclude that none but mad men destroy themselves; all the efforts of courage appear chimerical to dastardly minds; every one judges of others by himself. Nevertheless, how many instances are there, well attested of men, in every other respect perfectly discreet, who without remorse, rage, or despair, have quitted life for no other reason than because it was a burden to them, and have died with more composure than they lived?

to put an end to your sufferings; and I leave you to judge which of us is most dear to the other.

Why should we delay doing that which we must do at last? Shall we wait till old age and decrepid baseness attach us to life, after they have robbed it of its charms, and till we are doomed to drag a crazed and infirm body with labour, ignominy, and pain? We are at an age when the soul has vigour to disengage itself with ease from its shackles, and when a man knows how to die as he ought; when farther advanced in years, he suffers himself to be torn from life, which he quits with reluctance. Let us take advantage of this time when the tedium of life makes death desirable; and let us tremble for fear it should come in all its horrors, at the moment when we could wish to avoid it. I remember the time when I prayed to heaven only for a single hour of life, and when I should have died in despair if it had not been granted. Ah! what a pain it is to burst asunder the ties which attach our hearts to this world, and how wise it is to quite life the moment they are broken. I am sensible, my Lord, that we are both worthy of a purer mansion; virtue points it out, and destiny invites us to seek it. May the friendship which unites us preserve our union to the latest hour! O what a pleasure for two sincere friends voluntarily to end their days in each other's arms, to intermingle their latest breath, and at the same instant to give up their soul which they shared in common! What pain, what regret can infect their last moments? what do they quit by taking

taking leave of the world? They go together; they quit nothing.

LETTER CXV.

The ANSWER.

A BLIND passion, young man, distracts thee: be more discreet; do not pretend to give counsel, whilst thou standest so much in need of advice. I have known greater evils than yours. I am armed with fortitude of mind; I am an Englishman, and not afraid to die; but I know how to live and suffer as becomes a man. I have seen death near at hand, and have viewed it with too much indifference to go in search of it. But let us speak to yourself.

It is true, I thought you might be of use to me; my affection stood in need of yours: your endeavours might have been serviceable to me; your understanding might have enlightened me in the most important concern of my life. If I do not avail myself of it, whom are you to impute it to? Where is it? what is become of it? what are you capable of? of what use can you be in your present condition? what service can I expect from you? A senseless grief renders you stupid and unconcerned. Thou art no man; thou art nothing; and if I did not consider what thou *mightest be*, I cannot conceive any thing more abject than what thou *art*.

I need adduce no other proof than your letter itself. Formerly I could discover in you good sense and truth. Your sentiments were just,
your

your reflections proper, and I liked you not only from judgment but choice; for I considered your influence as an additional motive to excite me to the study of wisdom. But what do I perceive now in the arguments of your letter, with which you appear to be so highly satisfied? A wretched and perpetual sophistry, which in the erroneous deviations of your reason shews the disorder of your mind; and which I would not stoop to refute, if I did not commiserate your delirium.

To subvert all your reasoning with one word, I would only ask you a single question. You who believe in the existence of a God, in the immortality of the soul, and in the free-will of man, you surely cannot suppose that an intelligent being is embodied, and stationed on the earth by accident, only to exist, to suffer, and to die. It is certainly most probable that the life of man is not without some design, some end, some moral object. I intreat you to give me a direct answer to this point; after which we will deliberately examine your letter, and you will blush to have written it.

But let us lay aside all general maxims, about which we often hold violent disputes, without adopting any of them in practice; for in their application we always find some particular circumstances which makes such an alteration in the state of things that every one thinks himself dispensed from submitting to the rules which he prescribes to others; and it is well known, that every man who establishes general principles deems them obligatory on all the world, himself excepted.

cepted. Once more let us speak to you in particular.

You believe that you have a right to put an end to your being. Your proof is of a very singular nature; "because I am disposed to die," say you, I have a right to destroy myself." This is certainly a very convenient argument for villains of all kinds: they ought to be very thankful to you for the arms with which you have furnished them; there can be no crimes, which, according to your arguments, may not be justified by the temptation to perpetrate them; and as soon as the impetuosity of passion shall prevail over the horror of guilt, their disposition to do evil will be considered as a right to commit it.

Is it lawful for you therefore to quit life? I should be glad to know whether you have yet begun to live? What! was you placed here on earth to do nothing in this world? did not heaven, when it gave you existence, give you some task or employment? If you have accomplished your day's work before evening, rest yourself for the remainder of the day; you have a right to do it; but let us see your work. What answer are you prepared to make to the supreme Judge, when he demands an account of your time? Tell me, what can you say to him?—"I have seduced a virtuous girl; I have forsaken a friend in his distress." Thou unhappy wretch! point out to me that just man who can boast that he has lived long enough; let me learn from him in what manner I ought to have spent my life to be at liberty to quit it.

You enumerate the evils of human nature. You are not ashamed to exhaust common-place topics, which have been hackneyed over a hundred times; and you conclude that life is an evil. But search, examine into the order of things, and see whether you can find any good which is not intermingled with evil. Does it therefore follow that there is no good in the universe? and can you confound what is in its own nature evil, with that which is only an evil accidentally? You have confessed yourself, that the transitory and passive life of man is of no consequence, and only bears respect to matter from which he will soon be disencumbered; but his active and moral life, which ought to have most influence over his nature, consists in the exercise of free-will. Life is an evil to a wicked man in prosperity, and a blessing to an honest man in distress: for it is not its casual modification, but its relation to some final object, which makes it either good or bad. After all, what are these cruel torments which force you to abandon life? Do you imagine, that under your affected impartiality in the enumeration of the evils of this life, I did not discover that you was ashamed to speak of your own? Trust me, and do not at once abandon every virtue. Preserve at least your wonted sincerity, and speak thus openly to your friend; "I have lost all hope
 " of seducing a modest woman, I am obliged
 " therefore to be a man of virtue; I had much
 " rather die."

You are weary of living; and you tell me, that life is an evil. Sooner or later, you will receive consolation; and then you will say, Life
 is

is a blessing. You will speak with more truth, though not with better reason; for nothing will have altered but yourself. Begin the alteration then from this day; and since all the evil you lament is in the disposition of your own mind, correct your irregular appetites, and do not set your house on fire to avoid the trouble of putting it in order.

I endure misery, say you: is it in my power to avoid suffering? But this is changing the state of the question: for the subject of inquiry is not whether you suffer, but whether your life is an evil? Let us proceed. You are wretched, you naturally endeavour to extricate yourself from misery. Let us see whether, for that purpose, it is necessary to die.

Let us for a moment examine the natural tendency of the afflictions of the mind, as in direct opposition to the evils of the body, the two substances being of contrary natures. The latter become worse and more inveterate the longer they continue, and at length utterly destroy this mortal machine. The former, on the contrary, being only external and transitory modifications of an immortal and uncompounded essence, are insensibly effaced, and leave the mind in its original form, which is not susceptible of alteration. Grief, disquietude, regret, and despair, are evils of short duration, which never take root in the mind; and experience always falsifies that bitter reflection, which makes us imagine our misery will have no end. I will go farther. I cannot imagine that the vices which contaminate us, are more inherent in our nature than the troubles we endure: I not only believe that

they perish with the body which gives them birth; but I think, beyond all doubt, that a longer life would be sufficient to reform mankind, and that many ages of youth would teach us that nothing is preferable to virtue.

However this may be, as the greatest part of our physical evils are incessantly increasing, the acute pains of the body, when they are incurable, may justify a man's destroying himself; for all his faculties being distracted with pain, and the evil being without remedy, he has no longer any use either of his will or of his reason; he ceases to be a man before he is dead, and does nothing more in taking away his life, than quit a body which incumbers him, and in which his soul is no longer resident.

But it is not thus with the afflictions of the mind, which, let them be ever so acute, always carry their remedy with them. In fact, what is it that makes any evil intolerable? nothing but its duration. The operations of surgery are generally much more painful than the disorders they cure: but the pain occasioned by the latter is lasting; that of the operation is momentary, and therefore preferable. What occasion is there therefore for any operation to remove troubles which die of course by their duration, the only circumstance which could render them insupportable? Is it reasonable to apply such desperate remedies to evils which expire of themselves? To a man who values himself on his fortitude, and who estimates years at their real value, of two ways by which he may extricate himself from the same troubles, which will appear preferable, death or time? Have patience,
and

and you will be cured. What would you desire more?

“ Oh! (you will say,) it doubles my afflictions to reflect that they will cease at last!” This is the vain sophistry of grief! an apothegm void of reason, of propriety, and perhaps of sincerity. What an absurd motive of despair is the hope of terminating misery*! Even allowing this fantastical reflection, who would not chuse to increase the present pain for a moment, under the assurance of putting an end to it, as we scarify a wound in order to heal it? and admitting any charm in grief, to make us in love with suffering, when we release ourselves from it by putting an end to our being, do we not at that instant incur all that we apprehend hereafter?

Reflect thoroughly, young man; what are ten, twenty, thirty years, in competition with immortality? Pain and pleasure pass like a shadow; life slides away in an instant; it is nothing of itself, its value depends on the use we make of it. The good that we have done is all that remains, it is that alone which constitutes its worth.

Do not, therefore, say any more that your existence is an evil, since it depends upon yourself to make it a blessing; and if it be an evil to have lived, this is an additional reason for prolonging life. Do not pretend neither to say

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* No, my Lord, we do not put an end to misery by these means, but rather fill the measure of affliction, by bursting asunder the last ties which attach us to felicity. When we regret what was dear to us, grief itself still attaches us to the object we lament, which is a state less deplorable than to be attached to nothing.

any more that you are at liberty to die; for it is as much as to say that you have power to alter your nature, that you have a right to revolt against the Author of your being, and to frustrate the end of your existence. But when you add, that your death does injury to no one, do you recollect that you make this declaration to your friend?

Your death does injury to no one? I understand you! You think the loss I shall sustain by your death of no importance; you deem my affliction of no consequence. I will urge to you no more the rights of friendship which you despise; but are there not obligations still more dear*, which ought to induce you to preserve your life? If there be a person in the world who loved you to that degree as to be unwilling to survive you, and whose happiness depends on yours, do you think that you have no obligations to her? Will not the execution of your wicked design disturb the peace of a mind, which has been, with such difficulty, restored to its former innocence? Are not you afraid to add fresh torments to a heart of such sensibility? Are not you apprehensive lest your death should be attended with a loss more fatal, which would deprive the world and virtue itself of its brightest ornament? And if she should survive you, are not you afraid to rouse up remorse in her bosom, which is more grievous to support than life itself! Thou ungrateful friend! thou indelicate

* Obligations more dear than those of friendship! Is it a philosopher who talks thus! But this affected sophist was himself of an amorous disposition.

licate lover ! Wilt thou always be taken up wholly with thyself ? Wilt thou always think on thy own troubles alone ? Hast thou no regard for the happiness of one who was so dear to thee ? And cannot thou resolve to live for her who was willing to die with thee ?

You talk of the duties of a magistrate, and of a father of a family ; and because you are not under those circumstances, you think yourself absolutely free. And are you then under no obligations to society, to whom you are indebted for your preservation, your talents, your understanding ? Do you owe nothing to your native country, and to those unhappy people who may need your assistance ? O what an accurate calculation you make ! among the obligations you have enumerated, you have only omitted those of a man and of a citizen. Where is the virtuous patriot, who refused to enlist under a foreign prince, because his blood ought not to be spilt but in the service of his country ; and who now, in a fit of despair, is ready to shed it against the express prohibition of the laws ? The laws, the laws, young man ! did any wise man ever despise them ? Socrates, though innocent, out of regard to them refused to quit his prison. You do not scruple to violate them by quitting life unjustly ; and you ask, what injury do I ?

You endeavour to justify yourself by example. You presume to mention the Romans. You talk of the Romans ! it becomes you indeed to cite those illustrious names. Tell me, did Brutus die a lover in despair, and did Cato plunge the dagger in his breast for his mistress ? Thou weak and abject man ! what resemblance is there
between

between Cato and thee ? Shew me the common standard between that sublime soul and thine. Ah, hold thy peace, rash wretch ! I am afraid to profane his name by a vindication of his conduct. At that august and sacred name every friend to virtue should bow to the ground, and silently honour the memory of the greatest and most virtuous of men.

How ill chosen are your examples ! and how meanly you judge of the Romans, if you imagine that they thought themselves at liberty to quit life so soon as it became a burden to them. Recur to the excellent days of that republic, and see whether you will find a single citizen of virtue, who thus freed himself from the discharge of his duty even after the most cruel misfortunes. When Regulus was on his return to Carthage, did he prevent the torments which he knew were preparing for him, by destroying himself ? What would not Posthumus have given, when obliged to pass under the yoke at Caudium, had this resource been justifiable ? How much did even the senate admire that effort of courage, which enabled the consul Varro to survive his defeat ? For what reason did so many generals voluntarily surrender themselves to their enemies, they to whom ignominy was so dreadful, and who were so little afraid of dying ? It was because they considered their blood, their life, and their latest breath, as devoted to their country ; and neither shame nor misfortune could dissuade them from this sacred duty. But when the laws were subverted, and the state became a prey to tyranny, the citizens resumed their natural liberty, and the right they had o-

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ver their own lives. When Rome was no more, it was lawful for the Romans to give up their lives; they had discharged their duties on earth, they had no longer any country to defend; they were therefore at liberty to dispose of their lives, and to obtain that freedom for themselves which they could not recover for their country. After having employed their days in the service of expiring Rome, and in fighting for its laws, they died virtuous and great as they had lived; and their death was an additional tribute to the glory of the Roman name, since none of them beheld a sight above all others most dishonourable, that of a true citizen stooping to an usurper.

But thou, what art thou? what hast thou done? dost thou think to excuse thyself on account of thy obscurity? does thy weakness exempt thee from thy duty, and because thou hast neither rank nor distinction in thy country, art thou less subject to its laws? It well becomes you indeed to presume to talk of dying, while you owe the service of your life to your equals. Know, that a death, such as you meditate, is shameful and surreptitious. It is a theft committed on mankind in general. Before you quit life, return the benefits you have received from every individual. "But (say you) I have no attachments; I am useless in the world." O thou young philosopher! art thou ignorant that thou canst not move a single step without finding some duty to fulfil; and that every man is useful to society, even by means of his existence alone?

Hear me, foolish youth: thou art dear to me. I commiserate thy errors. If there still remains
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in thy breast the least sense of virtue, attend, and let me teach thee to be reconciled to life. Whenever thou art tempted to quit it, say to thyself—"Let me at least do one good action before I die." Then go in search for one in a state of indigence, whom thou mayest relieve; for one under misfortunes, whom thou mayest comfort; for one under oppression, whom thou mayest defend. Introduce to me those unhappy wretches whom my rank keeps at a distance. Do not be afraid of misusing my purse, or my credit: make free with them; distribute my fortune, make me rich. If this consideration restrains you to-day, it will restrain you to-morrow; if to-morrow, it will restrain you next day, it will restrain you all your life. If it has not the power to restrain you, die! you are indeed unfit to live.

L E T T E R CXVI.

From Lord B——.

MY dear friend, I cannot embrace you to-day, as I was in hopes I should, being detained two days longer at Kensington. It is the way of the court to be very busy in doing nothing, and all affairs run in a constant succession without being dispatched. The business which has confined me here eight days, might have been done in two hours; but as the chief concern of the ministry is to preserve an air of business, they waste more time in putting me off than it would cost them to dispatch me. My impatience,

tience, which is rather too evident, does not contribute to shorten the delay. You know that the court is not suited to my turn; I find it more intolerable since we have lived together, and I had rather a hundred times share your melancholy than be pestered with the knaves which abound in this country.

Mean time, in conversing with these busy sluggards, a thought struck me with regard to you, and I only wait your consent to dispose of you to advantage. I perceive, that, in struggling with your affliction, you suffer both from your uneasiness of mind, and from your resistance. If you are determined to live and overcome it, you have formed this resolution less in conformity to the dictates of reason and honour than in compliance with your friends. But this is not enough: you must recover the relish of life, to discharge its duties as you ought; for with so much indifference about every thing, you will succeed in nothing. We may both of us talk as we will, but reason alone will never restore you to your reason. It is necessary that a multiplicity of new and striking objects should in some measure withdraw you from that attention which your mind fixes solely on one object of its affections. To recover yourself, you must be detached from inward reflection, and nothing but the agitation of a busy life can restore you to serenity.

An opportunity offers for this purpose, which is not to be disregarded; a great and noble enterprise is on foot, and such an one as has not been equalled for ages. It depends on you to be a spectator and assistant in it. You will see
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the grandest sight which the eye of man ever beheld, and your turn for observation will be abundantly gratified. Your appointment will be honourable, and, with the talents you are master of, will only require courage and good health. You will find it attended with more danger than confinement, which will make it more agreeable to you; and, in few words, your engagement will not be for any long time. I cannot give you farther information at present; because this scheme, which is almost ripe for discovery, is nevertheless a secret with which I am not yet acquainted in all its particulars. I will only add, that if you decline this lucky and extraordinary opportunity, you will probably never recover it again, and will regret it as long as you live.

I have ordered my servant, who is the bearer of this letter, to find you out wherever you are, and not to return without a line; for the affair requires dispatch, and I must give an answer before I depart hence.

L E T T E R CXVII.

The ANSWER.

DO, my Lord, dispose of me: Whatever you propose, shall be complied with. Till I am worthy to serve you, let me at least claim the merit of obedience to your will.

L E T.

LETTER CXVIII.

From Lord B——.

SINCE you approve of the thought which occurred to me, I will not delay a minute to acquaint you that every thing is concluded ; and to explain to you the nature of the engagement I have entered into, in pursuance of the authority you gave me to make the agreement on your behalf.

You know that a Squadron of five men of war is equipped at Plymouth, and that they are ready to set sail. The commodore is Mr George Anson, a brave and experienced officer, and an old friend of mine. It is destined for the South-sea, whither it is to sail through the straits of Le Maire, and to come back by the East-Indies. You see therefore that the object is no less than to make the tour of the world ; an expedition which, it is imagined, will take up three years. I could have entered you as a volunteer ; but to give you more importance among the crew, I have obtained the addition of a tide for you, and you stand on the list in quality of engineer of the land-forces : this will be more suitable to you, because, having followed the bent of your genius from your first outset in the world, I know you made it your early study.

I propose to return to London to-morrow, to present you to Mr Anson within two days. In the mean time, take care to get your equipage ready, and provide yourself with books and instruments ; for the embarkation is ready, and

only waits for sailing orders. My dear friend, I hope that God will bring you back from this long voyage in full health of mind and body, and that at your return we shall meet never to be separated more.

L E T T E R CXIX.

To Mrs ORBE.

I AM preparing, my dear and lovely cousin, to make the tour of the world; I go to seek, in another hemisphere, that peace which I could not enjoy in this. Fool that I am! I am going to wander over the universe, without being able to find one place where my heart can rest. I am going to find a retreat from the world, where I may be far from you. But it becomes me to regard the will of a friend, a benefactor, a father. Without the smallest hopes of a cure, at least I will take pains for it, since Julia and virtue so ordain it. In three hours time I shall be at the mercy of the elements; in three days I shall lose sight of Europe; in three months I shall be in unknown seas, raging with perpetual tempests; in three years perhaps How dreadful is the thought of never seeing you more! Alas! the greatest danger is in my own breast; for whatever may be my fate, I am resolved, I swear, that you shall see me worthy to appear in your sight, or you shall never see me more.

Lord B——, who is on his return to Rome, will deliver this letter in his way, and acquaint
you

you with all particulars concerning me. You are acquainted with his disposition, and you will easily guess at those circumstances which he does not chuse to communicate. You was once no stranger to mine ; therefore you may likewise form some judgment of those things which I do not care to relate myself.

Your friend, I hear, has the happiness to be a mother as well as yourself. Ought she then to be O inexorable heaven ! O my mother ! why did heaven in its wrath grant you a son ?

I must conclude : I feel that I must. Farewell, ye pure and celestial souls ! farewell, ye tender and inseparable friends, the best women on earth ! Each of you is the only object worthy of the other's affections. May you mutually contribute to each other's happiness ! Deign now and then to call to mind the memory of an unfortunate wretch, who only existed to share with you every sentiment of his soul, and who ceased to live the moment he was divided from you. If ever——. . . . I hear the signal, and the shouts of the sailors. The wind blows fresh, and the sails are spread. I must on board : I must be gone. Thou vast and immense sea, which perhaps wilt bury me beneath thy waves ! O that upon thy swelling surge I could recover that calm which has forsaken my troubled soul !

L E T-

L E T T E R C X X .

From Mrs WOLMAR to Mrs ORBE.

HOW tedious is your stay ! This going backward and forward is very disagreeable. How many hours are lost before you return to the place where you ought to remain for ever, and therefore how much worse is it for you ever to go away ! The idea of seeing you for so short a time, takes from the pleasure of your company. Do not you perceive, that by residing at your own house and mine alternately, you are in fact at home in neither, and cannot you contrive some means by which you may make your abode in both at once ?

What are we doing, my dear cousin ? How many precious moments we lose, when we have none to waste ! Years steal upon us ; youth begins to vanish ; life slides away imperceptibly ; its momentary bliss is in our possession, and we refuse to enjoy it ! Do you recollect the time when we were yet girls, those early days so agreeable and delightful, which no other time of life affords, and which the mind with so much difficulty forgets ? How often, when obliged to part for a few days, or even for a few hours, have we sadly embraced each other, and vowed, that when we were our own mistresses, we should never be asunder ? We are now our own mistresses, and yet we pass one half of the year at a distance from each other. Is then our affection weaker ? My dear and tender friend, we are both sensible how much time, habit, and your kindness, have
ren-

rendered our attachment more strong and indissoluble. As to myself, your absence daily becomes more insupportable, and I can no longer live for a moment without you. The progress of our friendship is more natural than it appears to be ; it is founded, not only on a similarity of character, but of condition. As we advance in years, our affections begin to centre in one point. We every day lose something that was dear to us, which we can never replace. Thus we perish by degrees, till at length, being wholly devoted to self-love, we lose life and sensibility, even before our existence ceases. But a susceptible mind arms itself with all its force against this anticipated death : when a chillness begins to seize the extremities, it collects all the genial warmth of nature round its own centre ; the more connections it loses, the closer it cleaves to those which remain, and all its former ties are combined to attach it to the last object.

This is what, young as I am, I seem to experience. Ah ! my dear, my poor heart has been too susceptible of tender impressions ! It was so early exhausted, that it grew old before its time ; and so many different affections have absorbed it to that degree, that it has no room for any new attachments. You have known me in the successive capacities of a daughter, a friend, a mistress, a wife, and a mother. You know how every character has been dear to me ! Some of these connections are utterly destroyed, others are weakened. My mother, my affectionate mother, is no more ; tears are the only tribute I can pay to her memory, and I do but half enjoy the most agreeable sensations of nature. As

to love, it is wholly extinguished, it is dead for ever, and has left a vacancy in my heart, which will never be filled up again. We have lost your good and worthy husband, whom I loved as the dear half of yourself, and who was so well deserving of your friendship and tenderness. If my boys were grown up, maternal affection might supply these vacancies; but that affection, like all others, has need of participation, and what return can a mother expect from a child only four or five years old? Our children are dear to us, long before they are sensible of our love, or capable of returning it; and yet, how much we want to express the extravagance of our fondness, to some one who can enter into our affection! My husband loves them, but not with that degree of sensibility I could wish: he is not intoxicated with fondness, as I am; his tenderness for them is too rational; I would have it to be more lively, and more like my own. In short, I want a friend, a mother, who can be as extravagantly fond of my children, and her own, as myself. In a word, the fondness of a mother makes the company of a friend more necessarily to me, that I may enjoy the pleasure of talking continually about my children, without being troublesome. I feel double the pleasure in the caresses of my little Marcellinus, when I see that you share it with me. When I embrace your daughter, I fancy that I press you to my bosom. We have observed a hundred times, on seeing our little cherubs at play together, that the union of our affections has so united them, that we have not been able to distinguish to which of us they severally belonged.

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This is not all : I have powerful reasons for desiring to have you always near me, and your absence is painful to me in more respects than one. Think on my aversion to all hypocrisy, and reflect on the continual reserve in which I have lived upwards of six years towards the man whom I love above all others in the world. My odious secret oppresses me more and more, and my duty to reveal it seems every day more indispensable. The more I am prompted by honour to disclose it, the more I am obliged by prudence to conceal it. Consider what a horrid state it is for a wife to carry mistrust, falsehood, and fear, even to her husband's arms ; to be afraid of opening her heart to him who is master of it, and to conceal one half of my life to insure the peace of the other ? Good God ! from whom do I conceal my secret thoughts, and hide the recesses of a soul with which he has so much reason to be satisfied ? From my Wolmar, my husband, and the most worthy husband with which heaven ever rewarded the virtue of unfulfilled chastity. Having deceived him once, I am obliged to continue the deceit, and bear the mortification of finding myself unworthy of all the kindness he expresses. My heart is afraid to receive any testimony of his esteem, his most tender caresses make me blush, and my conscience interprets all his marks of respect and attention into symptoms of reproach and disdain. It is a cruel pain constantly to harbour this remorse, which tells me, that he mistakes the object of his esteem. Ah ! if he but knew me, he would not use me thus tenderly ! No, I cannot endure this horrid state ; I am never
alone

alone with that worthy man, but I am ready to fall on my knees before him, to confess my fault, and to expire at his feet with grief and shame.

Nevertheless, the reasons which at first restrained me, acquire fresh strength every day; and every motive which might induce me to make the declaration, conspires to enjoin me silence. When I consider the peaceable and tranquil state of our family, I cannot reflect without horror, when an irreparable disturbance might be occasioned by a single word. After six years passed in perfect union, shall I venture to disturb the peace of so good and discreet a husband, who has no other will than that of his happy wife, no other pleasure than to see order and tranquillity throughout his family? Shall I afflict with domestic broils, an aged father, who appears to be so contented, and so delighted with the happiness of his daughter and his friend? Shall I expose my dear children, those lovely and promising infants, to have their education neglected and shamefully slighted, to become the melancholy victims of family-discord, between a father inflamed with just indignation, tortured with jealousy, and an unfortunate and guilty mother, always bathed in tears? I know what Mr Wolmar is, now he esteems his wife; but how do I know what he will be when he no longer regards her? Perhaps he seems calm and moderate, because his predominant passion has had no room to display itself. Perhaps he would be as violent in the impetuosity of his anger, as he is gentle and composed now he has no subject of provocation.

If I owe such regard to every one about me, is not something likewise due to myself? Does not a virtuous and regular course of life for six years, obliterate, in some measure, the errors of youth, and am I still obliged to undergo the punishment of a failing which I have so long lamented? I own to you, my dear cousin, that I look backwards with reluctance: the reflection humbles me to that degree, that it dispirits me; and I am too susceptible of shame, to endure the idea, without falling into a kind of despair. I must reflect on the time which has passed since my marriage, in order to recover myself. My present situation inspires me with a confidence of which those disagreeable reflections would deprive me. I love to nourish in my breast these returning sentiments of honour. The rank of a wife and mother exalts my soul, and supports me against the remorse of my former condition. When I view my children and their father about me, I fancy that every thing breathes an air of virtue, and they banish from my mind the irksome remembrance of my former frailties. Their innocence is the security of mine; they become dearer to me, by being the instruments of my reformation; and I think on the violation of honour with such horror, that I can scarce believe myself the same person who formerly was capable of forgetting its precepts. I perceive myself so different from what I was, so confirmed in my present state, that I am almost induced to consider what I have to declare, as a confession which does not concern me, and which I am not obliged to make.

Such is the state of anxiety and uncertainty in
which

which I am continually fluctuating in your absence. Do you know what may be the consequence of this one day or other? My father is soon to set out for Berne, and is determined not to return till he has put an end to a tedious lawsuit; not being willing to leave us the trouble of concluding it, and perhaps doubting our zeal in the prosecution of it. In the mean time, between his departure and his return, I shall be alone with my husband, and I perceive that it will then be impossible for me to keep the fatal secret any longer. When we have company, you know Mr Wolmar often chuses to retire and take a solitary walk; he chats with the peasants; he inquires into their situation; he examines the condition of their grounds; and assists them, if they require it, both with his purse and his advice. But when we are alone, he never walks without me; he seldom leaves his wife and children, but enters into their little amusements with such an amiable simplicity, that on these occasions I always feel a more than common tenderness for him. In these tender moments, my reserve is in so much more danger, as he himself frequently gives me opportunities of throwing it aside, and has a hundred times held conversation with me which seemed to excite me to confidence. I perceive, that sooner or later, I must disclose my mind to him; but since you would have the confession concerted between us, and made with all the precaution which discretion requires, return to me immediately, or I can answer for nothing.

My dear friend, I must conclude; and yet what I had to add is of such importance, that
you

you must allow me a few words more. You are not only of service to me when I am with my children and my husband, but above all when I am alone with your poor Julia : solitude is more dangerous, because it grows agreeable to me, and I court it without intending it. It is not, as you are sensible, that my heart still smarts with the pain of its former wounds ; no, they are cured ; I perceive that they are ; I am very certain, I dare believe myself virtuous. I am under no apprehensions about the present, it is the time past which torments me. There are some reflections as dreadful as the original sensation ; the recollection moves us ; we are ashamed to find that we shed tears, and we do but weep the more. They are tears of compassion, of regret, and of repentance ; love has no share in them ; I no longer harbour the least spark of love ; but I lament the mischiefs it has occasioned ; I bewail the fate of a worthy man, who has been bereft of peace, and perhaps of life, by gratifying an indiscreet passion. Alas ! he has undoubtedly perished in this long and dangerous voyage which he undertook at the instigation of despair. If he was living, he would send us tidings from the farthest part of the world ; near four years have elapsed since his departure. They say the squadron on which he is aboard, has suffered a thousand disasters, that it hath lost three fourths of its crews, that several ships have gone to the bottom, and that no one can tell what is become of the rest. He is no more, he is no more ! A secret foreboding tells me so. The unfortunate wretch has not been spared, any more than so many others.

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The distresses of his voyage, and melancholy, still more fatal than all, have shortened his days. Thus vanishes every thing which glitters for a while on earth. The reproach of having occasioned the death of a worthy man, was all that was wanting to complete the torments of my conscience. Ah! my Clara, with what a soul was he endued! how susceptible of the tenderest love! He deserved to live.

In vain I try to dissipate these melancholy ideas; they return every minute in spite of me. Your friend requires your assistance, to enable her to banish, or to moderate them; and since I cannot forget this unfortunate man, I had rather talk of him with you, than think of him by myself.

You see how many reasons concur to make your company continually necessary to me. If you, who have been more discreet and fortunate, are not moved by the same reasons, yet does not your inclination persuade you of the same necessity? If it is true that you will never marry again, having so little satisfaction in your family, what house can be more convenient for you than mine? For my part, I am in pain, as I know what you endure in your own; for notwithstanding your dissimulation, I am no stranger to your manner of living, and I am not to be duped by those gay airs which you affected to display at Clarens. You have often reproached me with my failings; and I have a very great one to reproach you with in your turn; which is, that your grief is too solitary and confined. You get into a corner to indulge your affliction, as if you were ashamed to weep before your friend.

friend. Clara, I do not like this. I am not ungenerous like you; I do not condemn your tears; I would not have you cease at the end of two or ten years, or while you live, to honour the memory of so tender a husband; but I blame you, that after having passed the best of your days in weeping with your Julia, you rob her of the pleasure of weeping in her turn with you, and of washing away, by more honourable tears, the scandal of those which she shed in your bosom. If you are ashamed of your grief, you are a stranger to real affliction! If you find a kind of pleasure in it, why will you not let me partake of it? Are you ignorant that a participation of affections communicates a soft and affecting quality to melancholy, which content never feels? And was not friendship particularly designed to alleviate the evils of the wretched, and lessen their pains?

Such, my dear, are the reflections you ought to indulge; to which I must add, that when I propose your coming to live with me, I make the proposal no less in my husband's name than my own. He has often expressed his surprise, and even been offended, that two such intimates as we should live asunder: he assures me that he has told you so, and he is not a man who talks inadvertently. I do not know what resolution you will take with respect to these proposals; I have reason to hope, that it will be such as I could wish. However it be, mine is fixed and unalterable. I have not forgotten the time when you would have followed me to England. My incomparable friend! it is now my turn. You know my dislike of the town, my taste for

the country, for rural occupations, and how strongly a residence of three years has attached me to my house at Clarens. You are no stranger likewise to the trouble of removing a whole family, and you are sensible that it would be abusing my father's good nature to oblige him to move so often. Therefore if you will not leave your family and come to govern mine, I am determined to take a house at Lausanne, where we will all live with you. Prepare yourself therefore; every thing requires it; my inclination, my duty, my happiness. The security of my honour, the recovery of my reason, my condition, my husband, my children, myself, I owe all to you; I am indebted to you for all the blessings I enjoy, I see nothing but what reminds me of your goodness, and without you I am nothing. Come then, my much loved friend, my guardian angel; come and enjoy the work of your own hands, come and gather the fruits of your benevolence. Let us have but one family, as we have but one soul to cherish it; you shall superintend the education of my sons, and I will take care of your daughter; we will share the maternal duties between us, and make our pleasure double. We will raise our minds together to the contemplation of that Being, who purified mine by means of your endeavours; and having nothing more to hope for in this life, we will quietly wait for the next, in the bosom of innocence and friendship.

L E T.

LETTER CXXI.

ANSWER.

GOOD heaven! my dear cousin, how I am delighted with your letter! Thou lovely preacher! . . . Lovely indeed: but in the preaching strain nevertheless. What a charming peroration! A perfect model of ancient oratory. The Athenian architect! That florid speaker! You remember him In your old Plutarch . . . Pompous descriptions, superb temple! . . . When he had finished his harangue, comes another; a plain man; with a grave, sober, and unaffected air . . . who answered, as your cousin Clara might do . . . with a low, hollow, and deep tone . . . *All that he has said, I will do.* Here he ended, and the assembly rang with applause! Peace to the man of words. My dear, we may be considered in the light of these two architects; and the temple in question, is that of friendship.

But let us recapitulate all the fine things you have said to me. First, that we loved each other; secondly, that my company was necessary to you; thirdly, that yours was necessary to me likewise; and lastly, that as it was in our power to live together the rest of our days, we ought to do it. And you have really discovered all this without a guide! In truth, thou art a woman of vast eloquence! Well, but let me tell you how I was employed on my part, while you was composing this sublime epistle. After that, I will leave you to judge, whether what

you say, or what I do, is most to the purpose.

I had no sooner lost my husband, than you supplied the vacancy he had left in my heart. While he was living, he shared my affections with you; when he was gone, I was yours entirely; and, as you observe, with respect to the conformity of friendship and maternal affection, my daughter was an additional tie to unite us. I not only determined, from that time, to pass my days with you, but I formed a more enlarged plan. The more effectually to blend our two families into one, I proposed, on a supposition that all circumstances prove agreeable, to marry my daughter some day or other to your eldest son, and the name of husband assumed in jest, seemed to be a lucky omen of his taking it one day in earnest.

With this view, I endeavoured immediately to put an end to the trouble of a contested inheritance; and finding that my circumstances enabled me to sacrifice some part of my claim in order to settle the rest, I thought of nothing but placing my daughter's fortune in some sure funds, where it might be secure from any apprehensions of a law-suit. You know that I am whimsical in most things; my whim in this was to surprise you. I intended to come into your room one morning early, with my child in one hand, and the parchment in the other; and to have presented them both to you, with a fine compliment on committing to your care the mother, the daughter, and their effects, that is to say, my child's fortune. Govern her, I proposed to have said, as best suits the interest of your son; for from henceforwards it is your concern
and

and his; for my own part, I shall trouble myself about her no longer.

Full of this pleasing idea, it was necessary for me to open my mind to somebody who might assist me to execute my project. Guess now whom I chose for a confidant? One Mr Wolmar: Should you not know him? "My husband, cousin?" Yes, your husband, cousin. The very man from whom you make such a difficulty of concealing a secret, which it is of consequence to him never to know, is he who has kept a secret from you, the discovery of which would have given you so much pleasure. This was the true subject of all that mysterious conversation between us, about which you used to banter us with so much humour. You see what hypocrites these husbands are. Is it not very droll in them to accuse us of dissimulation? But I required much more of your husband. I perceived that you had the same plan which I had in view, but you kept it more to yourself, as one who did not care to communicate her thoughts, till she was led to the discovery. With an intent therefore to make your surprise more agreeable, I would have had him, when you proposed our living together, to have seemed as if he disapproved of your eagerness, and to have given his consent with reluctance. To this he made me an answer, which I will remember, and which you ought never to forget; for since the first existence of husbands, I doubt whether any one of them ever made such an answer before. It was as follows: "My dear little cousin, I know Julia . . . " I know her well . . . better than she imagines, perhaps . . . her generosity of heart is

“ so great, that what she desires ought not to be
“ refused, and her sensibility is too strong to
“ bear a denial, without being afflicted. Du-
“ ring these five years that we have been mar-
“ ried, I do not know that I have given her the
“ least uneasiness; and I hope to die without
“ ever being the cause of her feeling a mo-
“ ment’s inquietude.” Cousin, reflect on this:
This is the husband whose peace of mind you
are incessantly meditating to disturb.

For my part, I had less delicacy, or more
confidence in your gentleness of disposition, and
I so naturally diverted the conversation to which
your affection so frequently led you, that as you
could not tax me with coldness or indifference
towards you, you took it into your head that I
had a second marriage in view, and that I loved
you better than any thing, except a husband.
You see, my dear child, your most inmost
thoughts do not escape me. I guess your mean-
ing, I penetrate your designs; I enter into the
bottom of your soul, and for that reason I have
always adored you. This suspicion, which so
opportunely led you into a mistake, appeared to
me well worth encouraging. I took upon me
to play the part of the coquetish widow, which
I acted so well as to deceive even you. It is a
part for which I have more talents than inclina-
tion. I skilfully employed that piquant air
which I know how to put on, and with which I
have entertained myself in making a jest of more
than one young coxcomb. You have been ab-
solutely the dupe of my affectation; and you
thought me in haste to supply that place of a
man, to whom of all others it would be most
diffi-

difficult to find a successor. But I am too ingenuous to play the counterfeit long, and your apprehensions were soon removed. But to confirm you the more, I will explain to you my real sentiments on that point.

I have told you an hundred times when I was a maid, that I was never designed for a wife. If my determination had depended on myself alone, I should never have married. But our sex cannot purchase liberty but by slavery; and before we can become our own mistresses, we must begin by being servants. Though my father did not confine me, I was not without uneasiness in my family. To free myself from that vexation, therefore, I married Mr Orbe. He was so worthy a man, and loved me with such tenderness, that I most sincerely loved him in my turn. Experience gave me a more advantageous opinion of marriage than I had conceived of it, and effaced those ill impressions I had received from Chaillot. Mr Orbe made me happy, and did not repent his endeavours. I should have discharged my duty with any other, but I should also have vexed him; and I am sensible that nothing but so good a husband could have made me a tolerable wife. Would you think that even this afforded me matter of complaint? My dear, we loved each other too affectionately; we were never gay. A slighter friendship would have been more sprightly; I should even have preferred it; and I think I should have chosen to have lived with less content, if I could have laughed oftener.

Add to this, that the particular circumstances of your situation gave me uneasiness. I need

not

not remind you of the dangers to which an unruly passion exposed you. I reflect on them with horror. If you had only hazarded your life, perhaps I might have retained some remains of gaiety: but terror and grief pierced my soul; and till I saw you married, I did not enjoy one moment of real pleasure. You knew my affliction, you felt it. It had great influence over your good disposition, and I shall always bless those fortunate tears which were probably the occasion of your return to virtue.

In this manner I passed all the time that I lived with my husband. Since it has pleased the Almighty to take him from me, judge whether I can hope to find another so much to my mind, and whether I have any temptation to make the experiment? No, cousin, matrimony is too serious a state for me; its gravity does not suit with my humour; it makes me dull, and sits awkwardly upon me; not to mention that all constraint whatever is intolerable to me. Consider, you who know me, what charms can an attachment have in my eyes, during which, for seven years together, I have not laughed seven times heartily! I do not propose, like you, to turn matron at eight-and-twenty. I find myself a smart little widow, likely to get a husband still; and I think that if I were a man, I should have no objection to such a one as myself. But to marry again, cousin! hear me; I sincerely lament my poor husband, I would have given up one half of my days, to have passed the other half with him; and nevertheless, could he return to life, I should take him again for no other reason than because I had taken him before.

I have

I have declared to you my real intentions. If I have not been able to put them in execution, notwithstanding Mr Wolmar's kind endeavours, it is because difficulties seem to increase, as my zeal to surmount them strengthens. But my zeal will always gain the ascendancy; and before the summer is over, I hope to return to you for the remainder of my days.

It remains now that I vindicate myself from the reproach of concealing my uneasiness, and chusing to weep alone; I do not deny it, and this is the way I spend the most agreeable time I pass here. I never enter my house, but I perceive some traces which remind me of him who made it agreeable to me. I cannot take a step, I cannot view a single object, without perceiving some signs of his tenderness and goodness of heart; and would you have my mind to be unaffected? When I am here, I am sensible of nothing but the loss I have sustained. When I am near you, I view all the comfort I have left. Can you make your influence over my disposition, a crime in me? If I weep in your absence, and laugh in your company, whence proceeds the difference? Ungrateful woman! it is because you alleviate all my afflictions, and I cannot grieve while I enjoy your society.

You have said a great deal in favour of our long friendship: but I cannot pardon you for omitting a circumstance that does me most honour; which is, that I love you, though you eclipse me! Julia, you were born to rule. Your empire is more despotic than any in the world. It extends even over the will, and I experience it more than any one. How happens it, my
 dear

dear cousin? We are both in love with virtue; honour is equally dear to us; our talents are the same; I have very near as much spirit as you; and am not less handsome: I am sensible of all this; and yet notwithstanding all, you prescribe to me, you overcome me, you cast me down, your genius crushes mine, and I am nothing before you. Even while you were engaged in an attachment with which you reproached yourself, and that I, who had not copied your failing, might have taken the lead in my turn, yet the ascendancy still remained in you. The frailty I condemned in you, appeared to me almost in the light of a virtue; I could scarce forbear admiring in you, what I should have censured in another. In short, even at that time, I never accosted you without a sensible emotion of involuntary respect; and it is certain that nothing but your gentleness and affability of manners could intitle me to the rank of your friend: by nature, I ought to be your servant. Explain this mystery if you can; for my part, I am at a loss how to solve it.

But after all, I do in some measure conceive the reason, and I believe that I have explained it before now. It is, that your disposition enlivens every one round you, and gives them a kind of new existence, for which they are bound to adore you, since they derive it entirely from you. It is true, I have done you services of some importance; you have so often acknowledged them, that it is impossible for me to forget them. I cannot deny but that, without my assistance, you had been utterly undone. But what did I do, more than return the obligation
I owed

I owed you? Is it possible to have a long acquaintance with you, without finding one's mind impressed with the charms of virtue, and the delights of friendship? Know you not that you have power to arm in your defence every one who approaches you; and that I have no advantage whatever over others, but that of being, like the guards of Sesostris, of the same age and sex, and of having been brought up with you. However it be, it is some comfort to Clara, that, though she is of less estimation than Julia, yet without Julia she would be of less estimation still; and in short, to tell you the truth, I think that we stood in great need of each other, and that we should both have been losers if fate had parted us.

My chief anxiety at present is, lest while my affairs detain me here, you should discover your secret, which you are every minute ready to disclose. Consider, I intreat you, that there are solid and powerful reasons for concealing it, and that nothing but a mistaken principle can tempt you to reveal it. Besides, our suspicion that it is no longer a secret to him who is most interested in the discovery, is an additional argument against making any declaration without the greatest circumspection. Perhaps the reserve of your husband may serve as an example and a lesson to us: for in such cases there is very often a great difference between pretending to be ignorant of a thing, and being obliged to know it. Stay therefore, I beseech you, till we consult once more on this affair. If your apprehensions were well grounded, and your lamented friend was no more, the best resolution

tion you could take, would be to let your history and his misfortunes be buried together. If he is alive, as I hope he is, the case may be different; but let us wait till we are sure of the event. In every state of the case, do not you think that you ought to pay some regard to the last advice of an unfortunate wretch, whose evils all spring from you?

With regard to the danger of solitude, I conceive and cannot condemn your fears, though I am persuaded that they are ill-founded. Your past errors have made you fearful; but I preface better of the time present, and you would be less apprehensive, if you had more reason to be so. But I cannot approve of your anxiety with regard to the fate of our poor friend. Now your affections have taken a different turn, believe me, he is as dear to me as to yourself. Nevertheless, I have forebodings quite contrary to yours, and more agreeable to reason. Lord B—— has heard from him twice; and wrote to me, on the receipt of the last letter, to acquaint me that he was in the South seas, and had already escaped all the dangers you apprehend. You know all this as well as I, and yet you are as uneasy as if you knew it not. But there is a circumstance you are ignorant of, and of which I must inform you; it is, that the ship which he is on board of, was seen two months ago off the Canaries, making sail for Europe. This is the account my father received from Holland, which he did not fail to transmit to me; for it is his custom to be more punctual in informing me concerning public affairs, than in acquainting me with his own private concerns. My heart
tells

tells me that it will not be long before we hear news of our philosopher; and that your tears will be dried up, unless, after having lamented him as dead, you should weep to find him alive. But, thank God, you are no longer in danger from your former weakness.

*Deh! fosse or qui quel miser pur un poco,
Ch' è già di piangere e di viver lasso!*

Alas! what fears should heighten your concern,
So us'd in listless solitude to mourn!

This is the sum of my answer. She who loves you proposes and shares with you the agreeable expectation of a lasting re-union. You find that you are neither the first, nor the only author of this project: and that the execution of it is more forward than you imagined. Have patience therefore, my dear friend, for this summer. It is better to delay our meeting for some time, than to be again obliged to separate.

Well, good Madam, have not I been as good as my word, and is not my triumph complete? Come, fall on your knees, kiss this letter with respect, and humbly acknowledge, that, once in her life at least, Julia Wolmar has been outdone in friendship.

L E T T E R CXXII.

To Mrs ORBE.

MY dear cousin, my benefactress, my friend!
I come from the extremities of the earth,
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and bring a heart still full of affection for you. I have crossed the line four times; have traversed the two hemispheres, have seen the four quarters of the globe; its diameter has been between us: I have been quite round it, and yet could not escape from you one moment. It is in vain to fly from the object of our adoration: its image, more fleet than the winds, pursues us from the end of the world; and wherever we transport ourselves, we bear with us the idea by which we are animated. I have endured a great deal; I have seen others suffer more. How many unhappy wretches have I seen perish! Alas! they rated life at a high price! and yet I survived them . . . Perhaps my condition was less to be pitied; the miseries of my companions affected me more than my own. I am wretched here, said I to myself, but there is a corner of the earth where I am happy and tranquil; and the prospect of felicity beside the lake of Geneva, made me amends for what I suffered on the ocean. I have the pleasure on my return to find my hopes confirmed: Lord B—— informs me that you both enjoy health and peace; and that, if you, in particular, have lost the agreeable distinction of a wife, you nevertheless retain the title of a friend and mother, which may contribute to your happiness.

I am at present too much in haste to send you a detail of my voyage in this letter. I dare hope that I shall soon have a more convenient opportunity; mean time I must be content to give you a slight sketch, rather to excite than gratify your curiosity. I have been near four
years

years in making this immense tour, and have returned in the same ship in which I set sail, the only one of the whole squadron which we have brought back to England.

I have seen South-America, that vast continent, which, for want of arms, has been obliged to submit to the Europeans, who have made it a desert, in order to secure their dominion. I have seen the coasts of Brasil, from whence Lisbon and London draw their treasures, and where the miserable natives tread upon gold and diamonds, without daring to lay hands on them for their own use. I crossed, in mild weather, those stormy seas under the antarctic circle, and met with the most horrible tempests in the Pacific ocean.

*E in mar dubbioso sotto ignoto polo
Provai l'onde fallaci, e l'vento infido.*

Have brav'd the unknown seas, where near the
pole,
Blow faithless winds, and waves deceitful roll.

I have seen, at a distance, the abode of those supposed giants, who are no otherwise greater than the rest of their species, than as they are more courageous, and who maintain their independence more by a life of simplicity and frugality, than by an extraordinary stature. I resided three months in a desert and delightful island, which afforded an agreeable and lively representation of the primitive beauty of nature, and which seems to be fixed at the extremity of the world, to serve as an asylum to innocence and persecuted love; but the greedy Eu-

ropean indulges his brutal disposition in preventing the peaceful Indian from residing there, and does justice on himself by not making it his own abode.

I have seen in the rivers of Mexico and Peru, the same scenes as at Brasil; I have seen the few wretched inhabitants, the sad remains of two powerful nations, loaded with irons, ignominy, and misery, weeping in the midst of their precious metals, and reproaching heaven for having lavished such treasures upon them. I have seen the dreadful conflagration of a whole city, which perished in the flames without having made any resistance or defence. Such is the right of war among the intelligent, humane, and refined Europeans! They are not satisfied with doing the enemy all the mischief from whence they can reap any advantage, but they reckon as clear gain all the destruction they can make among his possessions. I have coasted along almost the whole western part of America, not without being struck with admiration, on beholding fifteen hundred leagues of coast, and the greatest sea in the world, under the dominion of a single potentate, who may be said to keep the keys of one hemisphere of the globe.

After having crossed this vast sea, I beheld a new scene on the other continent. I have seen the most numerous and most illustrious nation in the world; in subjection to a handful of banditti; I have had near intercourse with this famous people, and am not at all surprised that they are slaves. As often conquered as attacked, they have always been a prey to the first invader,

vader, and possibly will be so to the end of the world. I think them well suited to their servile state, since they have not the courage even to complain. They are learned, lazy, hypocritical, and deceitful : they talk a great deal without saying any thing to the purpose ; they are full of spirit without any genius ; they abound in signs, but are barren in ideas ; they are polite, full of compliments, dextrous, crafty, and knavish ; they comprise all the duties of life in trifles, all morality in grimace, and have no other idea of humanity than what consists in bows and salutations.

I landed upon a second desert island, more unknown, more delightful still than the first, and where the most cruel accident had like to have confined us for ever. I was the only one, perhaps, whom so agreeable an exile did not terrify ; am I not doomed to be an exile everywhere ? In this place of terror and delight I saw the attempts of human industry to disengage a civilised being from a solitude where he wants nothing ; and plunge him into an abyss of new necessities.

On the vast ocean, where one would imagine men would be glad to meet with their own species, I have seen two great ships sail up to each other, join, attack, and fight together with fury, as if that immense space was too little for either of them. I have seen them discharge flames and bullets against each other. In a fight which was not of long duration, I have seen the picture of hell. I have heard the triumphant shouts of the victors drown the cries of the wounded and the groans of the dying. I blushed to

receive my share of an immense plunder; but received it in the nature of a trust, and as it was taken from the wretched, to the wretched it shall be restored.

I have seen Europe transported to the extremities of Africa, by the labours of that avaritious, patient, and industrious people, who by time and perseverance have surmounted difficulties which all the heroism of other nations could never overcome. I have seen those immense and miserable countries, which seemed destined to no other purpose than to cover the earth with herds of slaves. At their vile appearance, I turned away my eyes out of disdain, horror and pity; and on beholding one fourth part of my fellow-creatures transformed into beasts for the service of the rest, I could not forbear lamenting that I was a man.

Lastly, I beheld, in my fellow-travellers, a bold and intrepid people, whose freedom and example retrieved, in my opinion, the honour of the species; a people who despise pain and death, and who dread nothing but hunger and disquiet. In their commander, I beheld a captain, a soldier, a pilot, a prudent and great man, and, to say still more perhaps, a friend worthy of Lord B——. But throughout the whole world, I have never beheld any resemblance of Clara Orbe, or Julia Etange, or found one who could recompense a heart truly sensible of their worth, for the loss of their society.

How shall I speak of my cure? It is from you that I must learn how far it is perfect. Do I return more free, and more discreet than I departed?

parted? I dare believe that I do, and yet I cannot affirm it, the same image reigns constantly in my heart; you know how impossible it is for me ever to dispossess it: but her dominion there is now more worthy of her; and if I do not deceive myself, the empire she holds in my heart, is the same she holds in yours. Yes, my dear cousin, her virtue has subdued me; I am now, with regard to her, nothing more than a most sincere and tender friend; my adoration of her is of the same nature with yours; or rather, my affections do not seem to be weakened, but rectified; and however nicely I examine, I find them to be as pure as the object which inspires them. What can I say more, till I am put to the proof, by which I may be able to form a right judgment of myself? I am sincere and honest; I will be what I ought to be; but how shall I answer for my affections, when I have so much reason to mistrust them? Have I power over the past? How can I avoid recollecting a thousand passions which have formerly distracted me? How shall my imagination distinguish what is, from what has been? And how shall I consider her as a friend, whom I never yet saw but as a mistress? Whatever you may think of the secret motive of my eagerness, it is honest and rational, and merits your approbation. I will answer beforehand, at least for my intentions. Permit me to see you, and examine me yourself; or allow me to see Julia, and I shall then know the condition of my heart.

I am to attend Lord B—— into Italy. Shall I pass close by your house, and not see you? Do you think this possible? Alas! if you are so cruel
to

to require it, you ought not to be obeyed! But why should you desire it? Are you not the same Clara, as kind and compassionate as you are virtuous and discreet, who condescended from her infancy to love me, and who ought to love me still more, now that I am indebted to her for every thing. No, my dear and lovely friend, such a cruel denial will neither become you, nor be just to me; it shall not put the finishing stroke to my misery. Once more, once more in my life, I will lay my heart at your feet. I will see you, you shall consent to an interview. I will see Julia likewise, and she too shall give her consent. You are both of you too sensible of my regard for her. Can you believe me capable of making this request, if I found myself unworthy to appear before her? She has long since bewailed the effects of her charms, ah! let her for once behold the fruits of her virtue!

P. S. Lord B——'s affairs detain him here for some time; if I may be allowed to see you, why should I not get the start of him, to be with you the sooner?

LETTER CXXIII.

From Mr WOLMAR.

ALTHOUGH we are yet unacquainted, I am commanded to write to you. The most discreet and most beloved wife, has lately disclosed her heart to her happy husband. He
thinks

thinks you worthy to have been beloved by her, and he makes you an offer of his house. It is the mansion of peace and innocence; and you will there meet with friendship hospitality, esteem, and confidence. Examine your heart, and if you find nothing there to deter you, come without any apprehensions. You will not depart from him, without leaving behind you at least one friend, by name

WOLMAR.

P. S. Come, my friend, we expect you with eagerness. I hope I need not fear a denial.

JULIA.

LETTER CXXIV.

From Mrs ORBE.

In which the preceding letter was inclosed.

WELCOME, welcome, a thousand times welcome, my dear St Preaux*! for I intend that you shall retain that name, at least among us. I suppose it will be sufficient to tell you, that you will not be excluded, unless you mean to exclude yourself. When you find, by the inclosed letter, that I have done more than you required of me, you will learn to put more
con-

* See letter CVII. in the present volume.

confidence in your friends, and not to reproach them on account of those inquietudes which they participate when they are under the necessity of making you uneasy. Mr Wolmar has a desire to see you; he makes you an offer of his house, his friendship, and his advice; this is more than requisite to calm my apprehensions with regard to your journey, and I should injure myself if I mistrusted you one moment. Mr Wolmar goes farther, he pretends to accomplish your cure; and says, that neither Julia, nor he, nor you, nor I, can be perfectly happy till it is complete. Though I have great confidence in his wisdom, and more in your virtue, yet I cannot answer for the success of this undertaking. I however know, that, considering the disposition of his wife, the pains he proposes to take is purely out of generosity to you.

Come then, my worthy friend, in all the security of an honest heart, and satisfy the eagerness with which we all long to embrace you, and to see you easy and contented: come to your native land, and in the midst of your friends rest yourself after all your travels, and forget all the hardships you have undergone. The last time you saw me I was a grave matron, and my friend was on the brink of the grave; but now, as she is well, and I am once more single, you will find me as gay, and almost as handsome as ever. One thing however is very certain, that I am not altered with respect to you, and you may travel many times round the world, and not find one who has so sincere a regard for you as your, &c.

L E T.

LETTER CXXV.

To Lord B——.

I RISE from bed to write to you, though it is yet the dead of night. I cannot rest a moment. My heart is so transported, that I can scarce confine it within me. You, my Lord, who have rescued me so often from despair, shall be the worthy confident of the first pleasure I have tasted for this many a year.

I have seen her, my Lord! My eyes have beheld her! I have heard her voice. I have pressed her hand with my lips. She recollected me; she received me with joy; she called me her friend, her dear friend; she admitted me into her house: I am happier than ever I was in my life. I lodge under the same roof with her; and while I am writing to you, we are scarce thirty paces asunder.

My ideas are too rapid to be expressed; they crowd upon me all at once, and naturally impede each other. I must pause a while to digest my narrative into some kind of method.

After so long an absence, I had scarce given way to the first transports of my heart, while I embraced you as my friend, my deliverer, and my father, before you thought of taking a journey to Italy. You made me wish for it, in hopes of relief from the burden of being useless to you. As you could not immediately dispatch the affairs which detained you in London, you proposed my going first, that I might have more time to wait for you here. I begged leave

to come hither; I obtained it, set out, and though Julia made the first advances towards an interview, yet the pleasing reflection that I was going to meet her, was checked by the regret of leaving you. My Lord, we are now even, this single sentiment has cancelled my obligations to you.

It is needless to tell you that my thoughts were all the way taken up with the object of my journey; but I must observe one thing, that I began to consider that same object, which had never quitted my imagination, quite in another point of view. Until then, I used to recal Julia to my mind, sparkling, as formerly, with all the charms of youth. I had always beheld her lovely eyes enlivened by that passion with which she inspired me. Every feature which I admired, seemed in my opinion, to be a surety of my happiness. My affection was so interwoven with the idea of her person, that I could not separate them. Now I was going to see Julia married, Julia a mother, Julia indifferent! I was disturbed when I reflected how much an interval of eight years might have impaired her beauty. She had had the small-pox, she was altered, how great might that alteration be? My imagination obstinately refused to allow any blemish in that lovely face. I reflected likewise on the expected interview between us, and what kind of reception I might expect. This first meeting presented itself to my mind under a thousand different appearances, and this momentary idea crossed my imagination a thousand times a day.

When I perceived the top of the hills, my
heart

heart beat violently, and told me, There she is ! I was affected in the same manner at sea, on viewing the coast of Europe. I felt the same emotions at Meillerie, when I discovered the house of the Baron d'Etange. The world, in my imagination, is divided only into two regions, *that* where she is, and *that* where she is not. The former dilates as I remove from her, and contracts when I approach her, as a spot where I am destined never to arrive. It is at present confined to the walls of her chamber. Alas ! that place alone is inhabited ; all the rest of the universe is an empty space.

The nearer I drew to Switzerland, the greater were my emotions. That instant in which I discovered the lake of Geneva from the heights of Jura, was a moment of ecstasy and rapture. The sight of my country, that beloved country, where a deluge of pleasure had overflowed my heart ; the pure and wholesome air of the Alps ; the gentle breeze of the country, more sweet than the perfumes of the East ; that rich and fertile spot, that unrivalled landscape, the most beautiful that ever struck the eye of man ; that delightful abode, to which I found nothing comparable in the vast tour of the globe ; the aspect of a free and happy people ; the mildness of the season, the serenity of the climate ; a thousand pleasing recollections, which recalled to my mind the pleasures I had enjoyed : all these circumstances together threw me into a kind of transport which I cannot describe, and seemed to collect the enjoyment of my whole life into one happy moment.

Having crossed the lake, I felt a new impres-

sion, of which I had no idea. It was a certain emotion of fear, which checked my heart, and disturbed me in spite of all my endeavours. This dread, of which I could not discover the cause, increased as I drew nearer to the town; it abated my eagerness to get thither, and rose to such a height, that my expedition gave me as much uneasiness as my delay had occasioned me before. When I came to Vevai, I felt a sensation which was very far from being agreeable. I was seized with a violent palpitation, which stopped my breath, so that I spoke with a trembling and broken accent. I could scarce make myself understood when I inquired for Mr Wolmar; for I durst not mention his wife. They told me he lived at Clarens. This information eased my breast from a pressure equal to five hundred weight, and considering the two leagues I had to travel farther as a kind of respite, I was rejoiced at a circumstance which at any other time would have made me uneasy; but I learnt with concern that Mrs Orbe was at Lausanne. I went into an inn to recruit my strength, but could not swallow a morsel: and when I attempted to drink, I was almost suffocated, and could not empty a glass but at several sips. When I saw the horses put to, my apprehensions were doubled. I believe I should have given any thing in the world to have had one of the wheels broken by the way. I no longer saw Julia; my disturbed imagination presented nothing but confused objects before me; my soul was in a general tumult. I had experienced grief and despair, and should have preferred them to that horrible state. In few words, I can assure you,
that

that I never in my life underwent such cruel agitation as I suffered in this little way, and I am persuaded that I could not have supported it a whole day.

When I arrived, I ordered the chaise to stop at the gate, and finding that I was not in a condition to walk, I sent the postilion to acquaint Mr Wolmar that a stranger wanted to speak with him. He was taking a walk with his wife. They were acquainted with the message, and came round another way, while I kept my eyes fixed on the avenue, and waited in a kind of trance, in expectation of seeing somebody come from thence.

Julia had no sooner perceived me than she recollected me. In an instant, she saw me, she shrieked, she ran, she leaped into my arms. At the sound of her voice I started, I revived, I saw her, I felt her. O my Lord! O my friend! . . . I cannot speak Her look, her shriek, her manner inspired me with confidence, courage, and strength, in an instant. In her arms I felt warmth, and breathed new life. A sacred transport kept us for some time closely embraced in deep silence; and it was not till after we recovered from this agreeable delirium, that our voices broke forth in confused murmurs, and our eyes intermingled tears. Mr Wolmar was present; I knew he was, I saw him: but what was I capable of seeing? No, though the whole universe had been united against me, though a thousand torments had surrounded me, I would not have detached my heart from the least of those caresses, those tender offerings of a pure
and

and sacred friendship, which we will bear with us to heaven.

When the violent impetuosity of our first meeting began to abate, Mrs Wolmar took me by the hand, and turning towards her husband, she said to him, with a certain air of candor and innocence which instantly affected me, " 'Tho' he is my old acquaintance, I do not present him to you, but I receive him from you, and he will hereafter enjoy my friendship no longer than he is honoured with yours."—" If new friends (said Mr Wolmer, embracing me) express less ardor than those of long standing, yet they will grow old in their turn, and will not yield to any in affection." I received his embraces ; but my heart had quite exhausted itself, and I was entirely passive.

After this short scene was over, I observed, by a side-glance, that they had put up my chaise, and taken off my trunk. Julia held by my arm, and I went with them towards the house almost overwhelmed with pleasure, to find they were determined I should remain their guest.

It was then that, upon a more calm contemplation of that lovely face, which I imagined might have grown homely, I saw with an agreeable, yet sad surprise, that she was really more beautiful and sparkling than ever. Her charming features are now more regular ; she is grown rather fatter, which adds to the resplendent fairness of her complexion. The small-pox has left some slight marks on her cheeks scarce perceptible. Instead of that mortifying bashfulness which formerly used to make her cast her eyes
down.

downwards, you may perceive in her chaste looks, the security of virtue allied with gentleness and sensibility; her countenance, though not less modest, is less timid; an air of greater freedom, and more liberal grace, has succeeded that constrained carriage which was compounded of tenderness and shame; and if a sense of her failing rendered her then more bewitching, a consciousness of her purity now renders her more celestial.

We had scarce entered the parlour, when she disappeared, and returned in a minute. She did not come alone. Who do you think she brought with her? Her children! her two lovely little ones, more beauteous than the day; in whose infant-faces you might trace all the charms and features of their mother. How was I agitated at this sight? It is neither to be described nor conceived. A thousand different emotions seized me at once. A thousand cruel and delightful reflections divided my heart. What a lovely sight! What bitter regrets! I found myself distracted with grief, and transported with joy. I saw if I may be allowed the expression, the dear object of my affections multiplied before me, Alas! I perceived at the same time too convincing a proof that I had no longer any interest in her, and my losses seemed to be multiplied with her increase.

She led them towards me. Behold, said she, with an affecting tone that pierced my soul, behold the children of your friend: they will hereafter be your friends. Henceforward I hope you will be theirs. And immediately the two little creatures ran eagerly to me, took me by the

hand, and so overwhelmed me with their innocent caresses, that every motion of my soul centered in tenderness. I took them both in my arms, and pressing them against my throbbing breast, Dear and lovely little creatures, said I, with a sigh, you have an arduous task to perform. May you resemble the authors of your being; may you imitate their virtues; and by your own hereafter, administer comfort to their unfortunate friends. Mrs Wolmar in rapture threw herself round my neck a second time, and seemed disposed to repay me, by *her* embraces, those caresses which *I* had bestowed on her two sons. But how different was this from our first embrace! I perceived the difference with astonishment. It was the mother of a family whom I now embraced; I saw her surrounded by her husband and her children: the scene struck me with awe. I discovered an air of dignity in her countenance, which had not affected me till now: I found myself obliged to pay her a new kind of respect; her familiarity was almost uneasy to me; lovely as she appeared to me, I could have kissed the hem of her garment, with a better grace than I saluted her cheek. In a word, from that moment, I perceived that either she or I were no longer the same, and I began in earnest to have a good opinion of myself.

Mr Wolmar at length took me by the hand, and conducted me to the apartment which had been prepared for me. This, said he, as he entered, is your apartment: it is not destined to the use of a stranger; it shall never belong to another; it shall hereafter remain empty, if not occupied by you. You may judge whether such

a com-

a compliment was not agreeable to me; but as I had not yet deserved it, I could not hear it without confusion. Mr Wolmar, however, saved me the trouble of an answer. He invited me to take a turn in the garden. His behaviour there was such as made me less reserved; and assuming the air of a man who was well acquainted with my former indiscretions, but who entirely confided in my integrity, he conversed with me as a father would speak to his child; and by conciliating my esteem, made it impossible for me ever to deceive him. No, my Lord, he is not mistaken in me; I shall never forget that it is incumbent on me to justify his and your good opinion. But why should my heart reject his favours? Why should the man whom I am bound to love be the husband of Julia?

That day seemed destined to put me to every kind of proof which I could possibly undergo. After we had joined Mrs Wolmar, her husband was called away to give some necessary orders, and I was left alone with her.

I then found myself involved in fresh perplexity, more painful and more unexpected than any which I had yet experienced. What should I say to her? how address her? Should I presume to remind her of our former connections, and of those times which were so recent in my memory? Should I suffer her to conclude that I had forgot them, or that I no longer regarded them? Think what a punishment it must be to treat the object nearest your heart as a stranger! What infamy, on the other hand, to abuse hospitality so far as to entertain her with discourse to which she could not now listen with decency?

Under

Under these various perplexities I could not keep my countenance; my colour went and came; I durst not speak, nor lift up my eyes, nor make the least motion; and I believe that I should have remained in this uneasy situation till her husband's return, if she had not relieved me. For her part, this *tete-a-tete* did not seem to embarrass her in the least. She preserved the same manner and deportment as before, and continued to talk to me with the same freedom; she only, as I imagined, endeavoured to affect more ease and gaiety, tempered with a look, not timid or tender, but soft and affectionate, as if she meant to encourage me to recover my spirits, and lay aside a reserve which she could not but perceive.

She talked to me of my long voyages; she inquired into particulars; into those especially which related to the dangers I had escaped, and the hardships I had endured: for she was sensible, she said, that she was bound in friendship to make me some reparation. Ah, Julia, said I, in a plaintive accent, I have enjoyed your company but for a moment; would you send me back to the Indies already? No, answered she smiling, but I would go thither in my turn.

I told her that I had given you a detail of my voyage, of which I had brought her a copy. She then inquired after you with great eagerness. I gave her an account of you, which I could not do without recounting the troubles I had undergone, and the uneasiness I had occasioned you. She was affected; she began in a more serious tone to enter into her own justification, and to convince me that it was her duty to act as she had

had done. Mr Wolmar joined us in the middle of her discourse, and what confounded me was, that she proceeded in the same manner as if he had not been there. He could not forbear smiling, on perceiving my astonishment. After she concluded, You see, said he, an instance of the sincerity which reigns in this house. If you mean to be virtuous, learn to copy it : it is the only request I have to make, and the only lesson I would teach you. The first step towards vice, is to make a mystery of actions innocent in themselves ; and whoever is fond of disguise, will sooner or latter have reason to conceal himself. One moral precept may supply the place of all the rest, which is this : neither to say or do any thing, which you would not have all the world see and hear. For my part, I have always esteemed that Roman, above all other men, who wished that his house was constructed in such manner, that the world might see all his transactions.

I have two proposals, he continued, to make to you. Chuse freely that which you like best ; but accept either one or the other. Then taking his wife's hand and mine, and closing them together, he said, Our friendship commences from this moment ; this forms the dear connection, and may it be indissoluble. Embrace her as your sister and your friend ; treat her as such constantly ; the more familiar you are with her, the better I shall esteem you : but either behave, when alone, as if I was present ; or in my presence, as if I was absent. This is all I desire. If you prefer the latter, you may chuse it without any inconvenience ; for as I reserve to myself

self the right of intimating to you any thing which displeases me, so long as I am silent in that respect, you may be certain that I am not offended.

I should have been greatly embarrassed by this discourse two hours before ; but Mr Wolmar began to gain such an ascendancy over me, that his authority already grew somewhat familiar to me. We all three entered once more into indifferent conversation, and every time I spoke to Julia, I did not fail to address her by the style of *Madam*. Tell me sincerely, said her husband at last, interrupting me, in your *tete-a-tete* party just now, did you call her *Madam*? No, answered I, somewhat disconcerted, but politeness . . . Such politeness, he replied, is nothing but the mask of vice ; where virtue maintains its empire, it is unnecessary, and I discard it. Call my wife *Julia* in my presence, or *Madam* when you are alone ; it is indifferent to me. I began to know what kind of man I had to deal with, and I resolved always to keep my mind in such a state as to bear his examination.

My body drooping with fatigue, stood in need of refreshment, and my spirits required rest ; I found both one and the other at table. After so many years absence and vexation, after such tedious voyages, I said to myself, in a kind of rapture, I am in company with Julia, I see her, I talk with her ; I sit at table with her, she views me without inquietude, and entertains me without apprehensions. Nothing interrupts our mutual satisfaction. Gentle and precious innocence, I never before relished thy charms ; and
to-day,

to-day, for the first time, my existence ceases to be painful.

At night, when I retired to rest, I passed by their chamber; I saw them go in together; I proceeded to my own in a melancholy mood, and this moment was the least agreeable to me of any I that day experienced.

Such, my Lord, were the occurrences of this first interview, so passionately wished for, and so dreadfully apprehended. I have endeavoured to collect myself since I have been alone; I have compelled myself to self-examination; but as I am not yet recovered from the agitation of the preceding day, it is impossible for me to judge of the true state of my mind. All that I know for certain, is, that if the nature of my affection for her is not changed, at least the mode of it is altered; for I am always anxious to have a third person between us, and I now dread being alone with her, as much as I used to long for it formerly.

I intended to go to Lausanne in two or three days; for as yet I have but half seen Julia, not having seen her cousin; that dear and amiable friend, to whom I am so much indebted, and who will always share my friendship, my services, my gratitude, and all the affections of my soul. On my return I will take the first opportunity to give you a farther account. I have need of your advice, and shall keep a strict eye over my conduct. I know my duty, and will discharge it. However agreeable it may be to reside in this house, I am determined, nay I have sworn, that when I grow too fond of my abode, I will that instant leave it.

L E T.

L E T T E R CXXVI.

Mrs WOLMAR to Mrs ORBE.

HAD you been so obliging as to have complied with our intreaties, and made a longer stay with us, you would have had the pleasure of embracing your friend before your departure. He came hither the day before yesterday, and wanted to visit you to-day; but the fatigue of his journey confines him to his room, and this morning he was let blood. Besides, I was fully determined, in order to punish you, not to let him go so soon; and unless you will come hither, I assure you that it will be a long time before you shall see him. You know it would be very improper to let him see the *inseparables* asunder.

In truth, Clara, I cannot tell what idle apprehensions bewitched my mind with respect to his coming hither, and I am ashamed to have opposed it with such obstinacy. As much as I dreaded the sight of him, I should now be sorry not to have seen him; for his presence has banished those fears which yet disturbed me, and which, by fixing my attention constantly on him, might at length have given me just cause of uneasiness. I am so far from being apprehensive of the affection I feel for him, that I believe I should mistrust myself more was he less dear to me; but I love him as tenderly as ever, though my love is of a different nature. It is from the comparison of my present sensations with those which his presence formerly occasioned, that I
derive

derive my security, and the difference of such opposite sentiments is perceived in proportion to their vivacity.

With regard to him, though I knew him at the first glance, he nevertheless appeared to be greatly altered; and what I should formerly have thought impossible, he seems, in many respects, to be changed for the better. On the first day, he discovered many signs of embarrassment, and it was with great difficulty that I concealed mine from him. But it was not long before he recovered that free deportment and openness of manner which becomes his character. I had always seen him bashful and timid; the fear of offending me, and perhaps the secret shame of acting a-part unbecoming a man of honour, gave him a certain air of meanness and servility before me, which you have more than once very justly ridiculed. Instead of the submission of a slave, at present he has the respectful behaviour of a friend, who knows how to honour the object of his esteem. He now communicates his sentiments with freedom and honesty; he is not afraid lest his severe maxims of virtue should clash with his interest; he is not apprehensive of injuring himself or affecting me, by praising what is commendable in itself; and one may perceive, in all he says, the confidence of an honest man, who can depend upon himself, and who derives from his own conscience that approbation which he formerly sought for only in my looks. I find also that experience has cured him of that dogmatical and peremptory air which men are apt to contract in their closets; that he is less forward to judge of man-

kind, since he has observed them more; that he is less ready to establish general propositions, since he has seen so many exceptions; and that, in general, the love of truth has banished the spirit of system: so that he is become less brilliant, but more rational; and one receives much more information from him, now he does not affect to be so knowing.

His figure likewise is altered, but nevertheless not for the worse; his countenance is more open; his deportment more stately; he has contracted a kind of martial air in his travels, which becomes him the better, as the lively and spirited gesture he used to express when he was in earnest is now turned into a more grave and sober demeanour. He is a seaman, whose appearance is cold and phlegmatic, but whose discourse is fiery and impetuous. Though he is turned of thirty, he has the look of a young man, and joins all the spirit of youth to the dignity of manhood. His complexion is entirely altered; he is almost as black as a Negro, and very much marked with the small-pox. My dear, I must own the truth; I am uneasy whenever I view those marks, and I catch myself looking at them very often in spite of me.

I think I can discover, that if I am curious in examining him, he is not less attentive in viewing me. After so long an absence, it is natural to contemplate each other with a kind of curiosity; but if this curiosity may be thought to retain any thing of our former eagerness, yet what difference is there in the manner as well as the motive of it! If our looks do not meet so often, we nevertheless view each other with more freedom.

dom. We seem to examine each other alternately by a kind of tacit agreement. Each perceives, as it were, when it is the other's turn, and looks a different way to give the other an opportunity. Though free from the emotions I formerly felt, yet how is it possible to behold with indifference one who inspired the tenderest passion, and who, to this hour, is the object of the purest affection? Who knows whether self-love does not endeavour to justify past errors? Who knows whether, though no longer under the blind influence of passion, we do not both flatter ourselves by secretly approving our former choice? Be it as it may, I repeat it without a blush, that I feel a most tender affection for him, which will endure to the end of my life. I am so far from reproaching myself for harbouring these sentiments, that I think they deserve applause; I should blush not to perceive them, and consider it as a defect in my character, and the symptom of a bad disposition. With respect to him, I dare believe, that next to virtue he loves me beyond any thing in the world. I perceive that he thinks himself honoured by my esteem; I in my turn will regard him in the same light, and will merit its continuance. Yes! if you saw with what tenderness he caresses my children; if you knew what pleasure he takes in talking of you, you would find, Clara, that I am still dear to him.

What increases my confidence in the opinion we both entertain of him, is, that Mr Wolmar joins with us; and since he has seen him, believes, from his own observation, all that we have reported to his advantage. He has talked

of him much these two evenings past, congratulating himself on account of the measures he has taken, and rallying me for my opposition. No, said he to me yesterday, we will not suffer so worthy a man to mistrust himself; we will teach him to have more confidence in his own virtue, and perhaps we may one day or other reap the fruits of our present endeavours with more advantage than you imagine. For the present, I must tell you that I am pleased with his character, and that I esteem him particularly for one circumstance, which he little suspects, namely, the reserve with which he behaves towards me. The less friendship he expresses for me, the more he makes me his friend; I cannot tell you how much I dreaded lest he should load me with caresses. This was the first trial I prepared for him; there is yet another by which I intend to prove him; after which, I shall cease all farther examination. As to the circumstance you mentioned, said I, it only proves the frankness of his disposition; for he would never resolve to put on a pliant and submissive air before my father, though it was so much his interest, and I so often intreated him to do it. I saw with concern that his behaviour deprived him of the only resource, and yet could not dislike him for not being able to play the hypocrite on any occasion. The case is very different, replied my husband: there is a natural antipathy between your father and him, founded on the opposition of their sentiments. With regard to myself, who have no systems or prejudices, I am certain that he can have no natural aversion to me. No one can hate me; a man without
passions

passions cannot incur the aversion of any one. But I deprived him of all that he held dear, which he will not readily forgive. He will however conceive the stronger affection for me, when he is perfectly convinced that the injury I have done him does not prevent me from looking upon him with an eye of kindness. If he caressed me now, he would be a hypocrite; if he never caresses me, he will be a monster.

You see, my dear Clara, the situation we are in; and I begin to think that heaven will bless the integrity of our hearts, and the kind intentions of my husband. But I am too kind to you in entering into all these details; you do not deserve that I should take such pleasure in conversing with you: but I am determined to tell you no more; so that if you desire farther information, you must come hither to receive it.

P. S. It is necessary, however, to acquaint you with what has passed with respect to the subject of this letter. You know with what indulgence Mr Wolmar received the late confession which our friend's unexpected return obliged me to make. You saw with what tenderness he endeavoured to dry up my tears and dissipate my shame. Whether, as you reasonably conjectured, I told him nothing new, or whether he was really affected by a proceeding which nothing but sincere repentance could dictate, he has not only continued to live with me as before, but he even seems to have redoubled his attention, his confidence, and esteem, as if he meant, by his kindness, to repay the confusion which my confession cost me. My dear

Clara, you know my heart; judge then what an impression such a conduct must make!

As soon as I found that he was determined to let our old friend come hither, I resolved, on my part, to take the best precautions I could contrive against myself: which was, to chuse my husband himself for my confidante; to hold no particular conversation, which I did not communicate to him; and to write no letter, which I did not shew to him. I even made it a part of my duty to write every letter as if it was not intended for his inspection, and afterwards to shew it to him. You will find an article in the present which was penned on this principle: if, while I was writing, I could not forbear thinking that he might read it, yet my conscience bears witness that I did not alter a single word on that account; but when I shewed him my letter, he bantered me, and had not the civility to read it.

I confess to you, that I was somewhat piqued at his refusal; as if he had doubted my honour. My emotion did not escape his notice; and this most open and generous man soon removed my apprehensions. Confess, said he, that you have said less concerning me than usual in that letter. I owned it; was it decent to say much of him, when I intended to shew him what I had written? Well, he replied with a smile, I had rather that you would talk of me more, and not know what you say of me. Afterwards, he continued, in a more serious tone; Marriage, said he, is too grave and solemn a state to admit of that free communication which tender friendship allows. The latter connection often hap-
pily,

pily contributes to moderate the rigour of the former; and it may be reasonable in some cases for a virtuous and discreet woman to seek for that comfort, intelligence, and advice from a faithful confidant, which it might not be proper for her to desire of her husband. Though nothing passes between you but what you would chuse to communicate, yet take care not to make it a duty; lest that duty should become a restraint upon you, and your correspondence grow less agreeable by being more diffusive. Believe me, the open-hearted sincerity of friendship is restrained by the presence of a witness, whoever it be. There are a thousand secrets of which three friends ought to participate; but which cannot be communicated but between two. You may impart the same things to your friend and to your husband, but you do not relate them in the same manner; and if you will confound these distinctions, the consequence will be, that your letters will be addressed more to me than her, and that you will not be free from restraint either with one or the other. It is as much for my own interest as for yours, that I urge these reasons. Do not you perceive that you are already, with good reason, apprehensive of the indelicacy of praising me to my face? Why will you deprive yourself of the pleasure of acquainting your friend how tenderly you love your husband, and me of the satisfaction of supposing that in your most private intercourses you take delight in speaking well of me? Julia! Julia! (added he, pressing my hand, and looking at me with tenderness,) why will you demean yourself by taking precautions
so

308 J U L I A; or,

so unworthy of you, and will you never learn to make a true estimate of your own worth?

My dear friend, it is impossible to tell you how this incomparable man behaves to me: I no longer blush in his presence. Spite of my frailty, he lifts me above myself, and by dint of reposing confidence in me, teaches me to deserve it.

L E T T E R CXXVII.

A N S W E R.

HOW! our traveller returned! and have I not yet seen him at my feet loaded with the spoils of America? But it is not him, I assure you, whom I accuse of this delay: for I am sensible it is as grievous to him as to me: but I find that he has not so thoroughly forgotten his former state of servility as you pretend, and I complain less of his neglect than of your tyranny. It is very extraordinary in you indeed, to desire such a prude as I am, to make the first advances, and run to salute a swarthy peck-fretten face, which has passed four times under the line. But you make me smile to see you in such haste to scold, for fear I should begin first. I should be glad to know what pretence you have to make such an attempt? Quarrelling is my talent. I take pleasure in it, I acquit myself to a miracle, and it becomes me; but you, my dear cousin, are a mere novice at the work. If you did but know how graceful you appear in the act of confession, how lovely you look with
a sup-

a supplicating eye and an air of confusion, instead of scolding, you would spend your days in asking pardon, were it only out of coquetry.

For the present, you must ask my pardon in every respect. A fine project truly, to chuse a husband for a confident, and a most obliging precaution indeed for a friendship so sacred as ours? Thou faithless friend, and pusillanimous woman! on whom can you depend, if you mistrust yourself and me? Can you, without offence to both, considering the sacred tie under which you live, suspect your own inclinations and my indulgence? I am astonished, that the bare idea of admitting a third person into the tittle-tattle secrets of two women, did not disgust you! For my part, I love to prattle with you at my ease; but if I thought that the eye of man ever pryed into my letters, I should no longer have any pleasure in corresponding with you; such a reserve would insensibly introduce a coldness between us, and we should have no more regard for each other than two indifferent women. To what inconveniences your silly distrust would have exposed us, if your husband had not been wiser than you!

He acted very discreetly in not reading your letter. Perhaps he would have been less satisfied with it than you imagine, and less than I am myself, who am better capable of judging of your present condition, by the state in which I have seen you formerly. All those contemplative sages who have passed their lives in the study of the human heart, are less acquainted with the real symptoms of love, than the most shallow woman, if she has any sensibility. Mr
Wolmar

Wolmar would immediately have observed that our friend was the subject of your whole letter, and he would not have seen the postscript, in which you do not once mention him. If you had written this postscript ten years ago, my dear, I cannot tell how you would have managed, but your friend would certainly have been crowded into some corner, especially as there was no husband to overlook it.

Mr Wolmar would have observed farther with what attention you examined his guest, and the pleasure you take in describing his person; but he might devour Plato and Aristotle, before he would know that we *look* at a lover, but do not *examine* him. All examination requires a degree of indifference, which we never feel when we behold the object of our passion.

In short, he would imagine that all the alterations you remark might have escaped another, and I on the contrary was afraid of finding that they had escaped you. However your guest may be altered from what he was, he would appear the same, if your affections were not altered. You turn away your eyes whenever he looks at you: this is a very good symptom. You *turn them away*, cousin? You do not now *cast them down*? Surely you have not mistaken one word for another. Do you think that our philosopher would have perceived that distinction?

Another circumstance very likely to disturb a husband, is a kind of tenderness and affection, which still remains in your style when you speak of the object who was once so dear to you. One who reads your letters, or hears
you

you speak, ought to be well acquainted with you, not to be mistaken with regard to your sentiments; he ought to know that it is only a friend to whom you are speaking, or that you speak in the same manner of all your friends; but as to that, it is the natural effect of your disposition, with which your husband is too well acquainted to be alarmed. How is it possible but that, in a mind of such tenderness, pure friendship will bear some resemblance to love?

Pray observe, my dear cousin, that all I say to you on this head ought to inspire you with fresh courage. Your conduct is discreet, and that is a great deal. I used to trust only to your virtue; but I begin now to rely on your reason: I consider your cure at present, though not perfect, yet as easy to be accomplished; and you have now made a sufficient progress, to render you inexcusable if you do not complete it.

Before I came to your postscript, I remarked the passage which you had the sincerity not to suppress or alter, though conscious that it would be open to your husband's inspection. I am certain, that if he had read it, it would, if possible, have doubled his esteem for you; nevertheless it would have given him no great pleasure. Upon the whole, your letter was very well calculated to make him place an entire confidence in your conduct, but tended at the same time to give him uneasiness with respect to your inclinations. I own, those marks of the small-pox, which you view so much, give me some apprehensions; love never yet contri-
ved

ved a more dangerous disguise. I know that this would be of no consequence to any other ; but always remember, Julia, that she who was not to be seduced by the youth and fine figure of her lover, was lost when she reflected on the sufferings he had endured for her. Providence no doubt intended that he should retain the marks of that distemper, to exercise your virtue ; and that you should be free from them, in order to put his to the proof.

I come now to the principal subject of your letter ; you know that on the receipt of our friend's, I flew to you immediately ; it was a matter of importance. But at present, if you knew in what difficulties that short absence has involved me, and how many things I have to do at once, you would be sensible how impossible it is for me to leave my house again, without exposing myself to fresh inconveniences, and putting myself under a necessity of passing the winter here again, which is neither for your interest or mine. Is it not better to deprive ourselves of the pleasure of a hasty interview of two or three days, that we may be together for six months ? I imagine likewise that it would not be improper for me to have a little particular and private conversation with our philosopher : partly to sound his inclinations, and confirm his mind ; partly to give him some useful advice with regard to the conduct he should observe towards your husband, and even towards you ; for I do not suppose that you can talk to him with freedom on that subject, and I can perceive, even from your letter, that he has need of counsel. We have been so long used to govern

govern him, that we are in conscience responsible for his behaviour; and till he has regained the free use of his reason, we must supply the deficiency. For my own part, it is a charge I shall always undertake with pleasure: for he has paid such deference to my advice as I shall never forget; and since my husband is no more, there is not a man in the world whom I esteem and love so much as himself. I have likewise reserved for him the pleasure of doing me some little services here. I have a great many papers in confusion, which he will help me to regulate; and I have some troublesome affairs in hand, in which I shall have occasion for his diligence and understanding. As to the rest, I do not propose to detain him above five or six days at most, and perhaps I may send him to you the next day. For I have too much vanity to wait till he is seized with impatience to return, and I have too much discernment to be deceived in that case.

Fail not, therefore, as soon as he is recovered, to send him to me; that is, to let him come, or I shall give over all raillery. You know very well, that if I laugh whilst I cry, and yet am not the less in affliction, so I laugh likewise at the same time that I scold, and yet am not the less in a passion. If you are discreet, and do things with a good grace, I promise you that I will send him back to you with a pretty little present, which will give you pleasure, and very great pleasure; but if you suffer me to languish with impatience, I assure you that you shall have nothing.

P. S. A propos; tell me, does our seaman smoke? does he swear? does he drink brandy? Does he wear a great cutlass? has he the look of a bucanier? O how I long to see what sort of an air a man has who comes from the Antipodes!

L E T T E R CXXVIII.

CLARA to JULIA.

HERE, take back your slave, my dear cousin. He has been mine for these eight days past, and he bears his chains with so good a grace, that he seems altogether formed for captivity. Return me thanks that I did not keep him still eight days longer; for, without offence to you, if I had kept him till he began to grow tired of me, I should not have sent him back so soon. I therefore detained him without any scruple; but I was so scrupulous, however, that I durst not let him lodge in my house. I have sometimes perceived in myself that haughtiness of soul, which disdains servile ceremonies, and which is so consistent with virtue. In this instance, however, I have been more reserved than usual, without knowing why: and all that I know for certain is, that I am more disposed to censure this reserve than to applaud it.

But can you guess what induced our friend to stay here so patiently? First, he had the pleasure of my company; and I presume that circumstance alone was sufficient to make him patient. Then he saved me a great deal of confusion,

gard to you ; and what he mentioned rather denoted respect and admiration, than love ; so that I have the pleasure to think that he will return, much more confident as to the nature of his affections, than when he came hither. Not but that, when you are the subject, one may perceive at the bottom of that susceptible mind, a certain tenderness, which friendship alone, though not less affecting, still expresses in a different manner ; but I have long observed that it is impossible to see you, or to think of you with indifference ; and if to that general affection which the sight of you inspires, we add the more tender impression which an indelible recollection must have left upon his mind, we shall find that it is difficult and almost impossible, that, with the most rigid virtue, he should be otherwise than he is. I have fully interrogated him, carefully observed him, and watched him narrowly ; I have examined him with the utmost attention. I cannot read his inmost thoughts, nor do I believe them more intelligible to himself : but I can answer, at least, that he is struck with a sense of his duty and of yours, and that the idea of Julia abandoned and contemptible, would be more horrid than his own annihilation. My dear cousin, I have but one piece of advice to give you, and I desire you to attend to it ; avoid any detail concerning what is passed, and I will take upon me to answer for the future.

As to the restitution which you mentioned, you must think no more of it. After having exhausted all the reasons I could suggest, I intreated him, pressed him, conjured him, but in
vain.

vain. I pouted, I even kissed him; I took hold of both his hands, and would have fallen on my knees to him, if he would have suffered me: but he would not so much as hear me. He carried the obstinacy of his humour so far, as to swear that he would sooner consent never to see you again, than part with your picture. At last, in a fit of passion, he made me feel it. It was next his heart. There, said he, with a sigh which almost stopped his breath, there is the picture, the only comfort I have left, and of which nevertheless you would deprive me; be assured that it shall never be torn from me, but at the expence of my life. Believe me, Julia, we had better be discreet, and suffer him to keep the picture. After all, where is the importance? His obstinacy will be his punishment.

After he had thoroughly unburdened and eased his mind, he appeared so composed, that I ventured to talk to him about his situation. I found that neither time nor reason had made any alteration in his system, and that he confined his whole ambition to the passing his life in the service of Lord B——. I could not but approve such honourable intentions, so consistent with his character, and so becoming that gratitude, which is due to such inexhausted kindness. He told me that you were of the same opinion; but that Mr Wolmar was silent. A sudden thought strikes me. From your husband's singular conduct, and other symptoms, I suspect that he has some secret design upon our friend, which he does not disclose. Let us leave him to himself, and trust to his discretion. The man-

ner in which he behaves, sufficiently proves, that, if my conjecture is right, he meditates nothing but what will be for the advantage of the person about whom he has taken such uncommon pains.

You gave a very just description of his figure and of his manners, which proves that you have observed him more attentively than I should have imagined. But do not you find that his continued anxieties have rendered his countenance more expressive than it used to be? Notwithstanding the account you gave me, I was afraid to find him tinged with that affected politeness, those apish manners which people seldom fail to contract at Paris, and which, in the round of trifles which employ an indolent day, are vainly displayed under different modes. Whether it be that some minds are not susceptible of this polish, or whether the sea air entirely effaced it, I could not discover in him the least marks of affectation; and all the zeal he expressed for me, seemed to flow entirely from the dictates of his heart. He talked to me about my poor husband; but instead of comforting me, he chose to join with me in bewailing him, and never once attempted to make any fine speeches on the subject. He caressed my daughter; but instead of admiring her as I do, he reproached me with her failings, and, like you, complained that I spoiled her; he entered into my concerns with great zeal, and was seldom of my opinion in any respect. Moreover, the wind might have blown my eyes out, before he would have thought of drawing a curtain; I might have been fatigued to death in going from
one

one room to another, before he would have had gallantry enough to have stretched out his hand, covered with the skirt of his coat, to support me : my fan lay upon the ground yesterday for more than a second, and he did not fly from the bottom of the room, as if he was going to snatch it out of the fire. In the morning, before he came to visit me, he never once sent to inquire how I did. When we are walking together, he does not affect to have his hat nailed upon his head, to shew that he knows the pink of the mode *. At table, I frequently asked him for his snuff-box, which he always gave me in his hand, and never presented it upon a plate, like a *fine gentleman*, or rather like a footman. He did not fail to drink my health twice at least at dinner, and I will lay a wager, that if he stays with us this winter, we shall see him sit round the fire with us, and warm himself like an old cit. You laugh, cousin; but shew me one of our gallants newly arrived from Paris, who preserves the same manly deportment. As to the rest, I think you must allow that our philosopher is altered for the worse in one respect, which is, that he takes rather more notice of people who speak to him, which he cannot do but to your prejudice ; nevertheless, I hope

* At Paris, they pique themselves on rendering society easy and commodious ; and this ease is made to consist of a great number of rules, equally important with the above. In good company, every thing is regulated according to form and order. All these ceremonies are in and out of fashion as quick as lightning. The science of polite life consists in being always upon the watch, to seize them as they fly, to affect them, and shew that we are acquainted with the mode of the day.

I hope that I shall be able to reconcile him to Madam Belon. For my part, I think him altered for the better, because he is more serious than ever. My dear, take great care of him till my arrival. He is just the man I could wish to have the pleasure of plaguing all day long.

Admire my discretion ; I have taken no notice yet of the present I sent you, and which is an earnest of another to come. But you have received it before you opened my letter, and you know how much, and with what reason I idolise it ; you, whose avarice is so anxious about this present, you must acknowledge that I have performed more than I promised. Ah ! the dear little creature ! While you are reading this, she is already in your arms ; she is happier than her mother ; but in two months time I shall be happier than she, for I shall be more sensible of my felicity. Alas ! dear cousin, do not you possess me wholly already ? Where you and my daughter are, what part of me is wanting ? There she is, the dear little infant ; take her as your own ; I give her up ; I put her into your hands ; I consign all maternal authority over to you ; correct my failings ; take that charge upon yourself, of which I acquitted myself so little to your liking : henceforward be as a mother to her, who is one day to be your daughter-in-law ; and to render her dearer to me still, make another Julia of her if possible. She is like you in the face already ; as to her temper, I guess that she will be grave and thoughtful ; when you have corrected those little caprices which I have been accused of encouraging, you will find that
my

my daughter will give herself the airs of my cousin; but she will be happier than Julia in having less tears to shed, and less struggles to encounter. Do you know that she cannot be any longer without her little M—, and that it is partly for that reason I send her back? I had a conversation with her yesterday, which threw our friends into an immoderate fit of laughing. First, she leaves me without the least regret; I, who am her humble servant all day long, and can deny her nothing she asks for; and you, of whom she is afraid, and who answer her, *No*, twenty times a-day; you, by way of excellence, are her little mamma, whom she visits with pleasure, and whose denials she likes better than all my fine presents: when I told her that I was going to send her to you, she was transported as you may imagine; but to perplex her, I told her that you in return was to send me little M— in her stead, and that was not agreeable to her. She was quite at a nonplus, and asked what I would do with him. I told her that I would take him to myself: she began to pout. “Harriot, (said I,) will not you give up your little M—to me?” No, said she, somewhat coldly. “No? But if I will not give him up neither, who shall settle it between us?” Mamma, my little mamma shall settle it. “Then I shall have the preference, for you know she will do whatever I desire. Oh, but mamma will do nothing but what is right!” And do you think I should desire what is wrong!” The sly little jade began to smile. “But after all, (continued I,) for what reason should she refuse to give me little M——?” Because he is not fit for you. “And why

why is he not fit for me?" Another arch smile, as full of meaning as the former. "Tell me honestly, is it not because you think me too old for him?" No, mamma, but he is too young for you. This from a child but seven years old. . . .

I amused myself with piquing her still farther. "My dear Harriot, (said I, assuming a serious air,) I assure you that he is not fit for you neither." Why so, she cried, as if she had been suddenly alarmed. "Because he is too giddy for you." Oh, mamma, is that all? I will make him wise. "But if unfortunately he should make you foolish? Then, mamma, I should be like you. "Like me, impertinence?" Yes, mamma, you are saying all day that you are foolishly fond of me. Well then I will be foolishly fond of him, that is all.

I know you do not approve of this pretty prattle, and that you will soon know how to check it. Neither will I justify it, though I own it delights me; but I only mention it to convince you, that my daughter is already in love with her little M——; and that if he is two years younger, she is not unworthy of that authority, which she may claim by right of seniority. I perceive likewise, by opposing your example and my own to that of your poor mother's, that where the woman governs, the house is not the worse managed. Farewell, my dear friend; farewell, my constant companion! The time is approaching, and the vintage shall not be gathered without me.

L E T.

LETTER CXXIX.

To Lord B——.

WHAT pleasures, (alas too late enjoyed,) have I tasted these three weeks past! How delightful to pass one day in the bosom of calm friendship, secure from the tempests of impetuous passion! What a pleasing and affecting scene, my Lord, is a plain and well-regulated family, where order, peace, and innocence, reign throughout; where, without pomp or retinue, every thing is assembled which can contribute to the real felicity of mankind. The country, the retirement, the season, the vast body of water which opens to my view, the wild prospect of the mountains, every thing conspires to recall to my mind the delightful island of Tinian. I flatter myself that the earnest prayers, which I there so often repeated, are now accomplished. I live here agreeably to my taste, and enjoy society suitable to my liking. I only want the company of two persons to complete my happiness, and I hope to see them here.

In the mean time, till you and Mrs Orbe come to perfect those charming and innocent pleasures, which I begin to relish here, I will endeavour, by way of detail, to give you an idea of that domestic œconomy, which proclaims the happiness of the master and mistress, and communicates their felicity to every one under their roof. I hope that my reflections may one day be of use to you, with respect to the project you
have

have in view, and this hope encourages me to pursue them.

It is needless to give you a description of Clarens house. You know it. You can tell how delightful it is, what interesting recollections it presents to my mind; you can judge how dear it must be to me, both on account of the present scenes it exhibits, and of those which it recalls to my mind. Mrs Wolmar, with good reason, prefers this abode to that of Etange, a superb and magnificent castle, but old, gloomy, and inconvenient, its situation being far inferior to the country round Clarens.

Since Mr and Mrs Wolmar have fixed their residence here, they have converted to use every thing which served only for ornament: it is no longer a house for shew, but for convenience. They have shut up a long range of rooms, to alter the inconvenient situation of the doors; they have cut off others that were over-sized, that the apartments might be better distributed. Instead of rich and antique furniture, they have substituted what is neat and convenient. Every thing here is pleasant and agreeable; every thing breathes an air of plenty and propriety, without any appearance of pomp and luxury. There is not a single room, in which you do not immediately recollect that you are in the country, but in which, nevertheless, you will find all the conveniences you meet with in town. The same alterations are observable without doors. The yard has been enlarged at the expence of the coach-houses. Instead of an old tattered billiard-table, they have made a fine press; and the spot which used to be filled with screaming pea-

peacocks, which they have parted with, is converted into a dairy. The kitchen-garden was too small for the kitchen; they have made another out of a flower-garden, but so convenient, and so well laid out, that the spot, thus transformed, looks more agreeable to the eye than before. Instead of the mournful yews which covered the wall, they have planted good fruit-trees. In the room of the useless Indian *black-berry*, fine young mulberry-trees now begin to shade the yard; and they have planted two rows of walnut-trees quite to the road, in the place of some old linden-trees which bordered the avenue. They have throughout substituted the useful in the room of the agreeable, and yet the agreeable has gained by the alteration. For my own part, at least, I think that the noises in the yard, such as the crowing of the cocks, the lowing of the cattle, the harness of the carts, the rural repasts, the return of the husbandmen, and all the train of rustic œconomy, give the house a more lively, animated and gay appearance, than it had in its former state of mournful dignity.

Their estate is not out upon lease, but they are their own farmers; and the cultivation of it employs a great deal of their time, and makes a great part both of their pleasure and profit. The manor of Etange is nothing but meadow, pasture, and wood: but the produce of Clarens consists of vineyards, which are considerable objects, and in which the difference of culture produces more sensible effects than in corn; which is a farther reason why, in point of œconomy, they should prefer the latter as a place

of residence. Nevertheless, they generally go to Etange every year at harvest-time, and Mr Wolmar visits it frequently. It is a maxim with them to cultivate their lands to the utmost they will produce, not for the sake of extraordinary profit, but as the means of employing more hands. Mr Wolmar maintains, that the produce of the earth is in proportion to the number of hands employed; the better it is tilled, it yields the greater increase; and the surplus of its produce furnishes the means of cultivating it still farther; the more it is stocked with men and cattle, the greater abundance it yields for their support. No one can tell, says he, where this continual and reciprocal increase of produce and of labour may end. On the contrary, land neglected loses its fertility; the fewer men a country produces, the less provision it furnishes. The scarcity of inhabitants is the reason why it is insufficient to maintain the few it has; and in every country which tends to depopulation, the people will sooner or later die of famine.

Therefore having a great deal of land, which they cultivate with the utmost industry, they require, besides the servants in the yard, a great number of day-labourers; which procures them the pleasure of maintaining a great number of people, without any inconvenience to themselves. In the choice of their labourers, they always prefer neighbours, and those of the same place, to strangers and foreigners. Though by this means they may sometimes be losers in not chusing the most robust, yet this loss is soon made up by the affection which this preference inspires in those whom they chuse, by the advantage likewise of
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having them always about them, and of being able to depend on them at all times, though they keep them in pay but part of the year.

With these labourers they always make two prices. One is a strict payment of right, the current price of the country, which they engage to pay them when they hire them. The other, which is more liberal, is a payment of generosity; it is bestowed only as they are found to deserve it, and it seldom happens that they do not earn the surplus: for Mr Wolmar is just and strict, and never suffers institutions of grace and favour to degenerate into custom and abuse. Over these labourers are placed overseers, who watch and encourage them. These overseers work along with the rest; and are interested in their labour, by a little augmentation which is made to their wages for every advantage that is reaped from their industry. Besides, Mr Wolmar visits them almost every day himself, sometimes often in a day, and his wife loves to be with him in these walks. In times of extraordinary business, Julia every week bestows some little gratifications to such of the labourers, or other servants, as, in the judgment of their master, have been most industrious for the last week. All these means of promoting emulation, though seemingly expensive, when used with justice and discretion, insensibly make people laborious and diligent, and in the end bring in more than is disbursed; but as they only turn to profit by time and perseverance, few people know any thing of them, or are willing to make use of them.

But the most effectual method of all, which is peculiar to Mrs Wolmar, and which they who

are bent on oeconomy seldom think of, is that of gaining the hearts of those good people, by making them the objects of her affection. She does not think it sufficient to reward their industry by giving them money, but she thinks herself bound to do farther services to those who have contributed to her's. Labourers, domestics, all who serve her, if it be but for a day, become her children; she takes part in their pleasures, their cares, and their fortune; she inquires into their affairs, and makes their interests her own; she engages in a thousand concerns for them, she gives them her advice, she accommodates their differences, and does not shew the affability of her disposition in smooth and fruitless speeches, but in real services and continual acts of benevolence. They, on their parts, leave every thing to serve her, on the least motion. They fly when she speaks to them; her look alone animates their zeal; in her presence they are contented; in her absence they talk of her, and are eager to be employed. Her charms and her manner of conversing do a great deal; her gentleness and her virtues still more. Ah! my Lord, what a powerful and adorable empire is that of benevolent beauty!

With respect to their personal attendants, they have within doors eight servants, three women and five men, without reckoning the baron's valet de chambre, or the servants in the out-houses. It seldom happens that people, who have but few domestics, are ill served: but from the uncommon zeal of these servants, one would conclude that each thought himself charged with the business of the other seven; and from the har-

harmony among them, one would imagine that the whole business was done by one man. You never see them in the out-houses idle and unemployed, or playing in the court-yard, but always about some useful employment; they assist in the yard, in the cellar, and in the kitchen. The gardener has nobody under him but them; and what is most agreeable, you see them do all this cheerfully and with pleasure.

They take them young, in order to form them to their minds. They do not follow the maxim here, which prevails at Paris and London, of chusing domestics ready formed, that is to say, complete rascals, runners of quality, who, in every family they go through, catch the failings both of master and man, and make a trade of serving every body, without being attached to any one. There can be neither honesty, fidelity, or zeal, among such fellows; and this collection of rable serves to ruin the masters, and corrupt the children, in all wealthy families. Here, the choice of domestics is considered as an article of importance. They do not regard them merely as mercenaries, from whom they only require a stipulated service; but as members of a family, which, should they be ill chosen, might be ruined by that means. The first thing they require of them is to be honest, the next is to love their master, and the third to serve him to his liking; but where a master is reasonable, and a servant intelligent, the third is the consequence of the two first. Therefore they do not take them from town, but from the country. This is the first place they live in, and it will assuredly be the last if they are good for any thing.

thing. They take them out of some numerous family overstocked with children, whose parents come to offer them of their own accord. They chuse them young, well made, healthy, and of an agreeable countenance. Mr Wolmar interrogates and examines them, and then presents them to his wife. If they prove agreeable to both, they are received at first upon trial, afterwards they are admitted among the number of servants, or more properly the children of the family, and they employ some days in teaching them their duty with a great deal of care and patience. The service is so simple, so equal and uniform, the master and mistress are so little subject to whims and caprice, and the servants so soon conceive an affection for them, that their business is soon learnt. Their condition is agreeable; they find conveniences which they had not at home; but they are not suffered to be enervated by idleness, the parent of all vice. They do not allow them to become gentlemen, and to grow proud in their service. They continue to work as they did with their own family; in fact, they do but change their father and mother, and get more wealthy parents. They do not therefore hold their old rustic employments in contempt. Whenever they leave this place, there is not one of them who had not rather turn peasant, than take any other employment. In short, I never saw a family, where every one acquits himself so well in his service, and thinks so little of the trouble of servitude.

Thus by training up their servants themselves, in this discreet manner, they guard against the objection which is so very trifling, and so frequently

quently made: "I shall only bring them up for the service of others." Train them properly, one might answer, and they will never serve any one else. If in bringing them up, you solely regard your own benefit, they have a right to consult their own interest in quitting you; but if you seem to consider their advantage, they will remain constantly attached to you. It is the intention alone which constitutes the obligation, and he who is indirectly benefited by an act of kindness, wherein I meant to serve myself only, owes me no obligation whatever.

As a double preventive against this inconvenience, Mr and Mrs Wolmar take another method, which appears to me extremely prudent. At the first establishment of their household, they calculated what number of servants their fortune would allow them to keep, and they found it to amount to fifteen or sixteen; in order to be better served, they made a reduction of half that number; so that with less retinue, they have more exact service. To be more effectually served still, they have made it the interest of their servants to continue with them a long time. When a domestic first enters into their service, he receives the common wages; but those wages are augmented every year by a twentieth part; so that at the end of twenty years, they will be more than doubled, and the charge of keeping these servants will be nearly the same, in proportion to the master's circumstances. But there is no need of being a deep algebraist to discover, that the expence of this augmentation is more in appearance than reality; that there will be but few to whom double wages will be paid; and that

that if they were paid to all the servants, yet the benefit of having been well served for twenty years past, would more than compensate the extraordinary expence. You will be sensible, my Lord, that this is a certain expedient of making servants grow continually more and more careful, and of attaching them to you by attaching yourself to them. There is not only prudence, but justice, in such an establishment. Is it reasonable that a new comer, who has no affection for you, and who is perhaps an unworthy object, should receive the same salary, at his first entrance into the family, as an old servant, whose zeal and fidelity have been tried in a long course of services, and who besides, being grown in years, draws near the time when he will be incapable of providing for himself? The latter reason, however, must not be brought into the account; and you may easily imagine that such a benevolent master and mistress do not fail to discharge that duty, which many who are devoid of charity, fulfill out of ostentation; and you may suppose that they do not abandon those whose infirmities or old age render them incapable of service.

I can give you a very striking instance of their attention to this duty. The Baron d'Etange being desirous to recompense the long services of his valet de chambre, by procuring him an honourable retreat, had the interest to obtain for him the L. L. E. E. an easy and lucrative post. Julia has just now received a most affecting letter from this old servant, in which he intreats her to get him excused from accepting this employment. "I am in years, says he, I have
lost

lost all my family ; I have no relations but my master and his family ; all my hope is to end my days quietly in the house where I have passed the greatest part of them. Often, dear madam, as I have held you in my arms when but an infant, I prayed to heaven that I might one day hold your little ones in the same manner. My prayers have been heard ; do not deny me the happiness of seeing them grow and prosper like you. I who have been accustomed to a quiet family, where shall I find such another place of rest in my old age ? Be so kind to write to the Baron in my behalf. If he is dissatisfied with me, let him turn me off, and give me no employment ; but if I have served him faithfully for these forty years past, let him allow me to end my days in his service and yours ; he cannot reward me better." It is needless to ask if Julia wrote to the Baron or not. I perceive that she would be as unwilling to part with this good man, as he would be to leave her. Am I wrong, my Lord, when I compare a master and mistress, thus beloved, to good parents, and their servants to obedient children ? You see it is in this light that they consider themselves.

There is not a single instance in this family of a servant's giving warning. It is even very seldom that they are threatened with a dismissal. A menace of this kind alarms them in proportion as their service is pleasant and agreeable. The best subjects are always the soonest alarmed, and there is never any occasion to come to extremities but with such as are not worth regretting. They have likewise a rule in this respect.

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When Mr Wolmar says, "I discharge you," they may then implore Mrs Wolmar to intercede for them, and through her intercession may be restored; and if she gives them warning, it is irrevocable, and they have no favour to hope for. This agreement between them is very well calculated both to moderate the extreme confidence which her gentleness might beget in them, and the violent apprehensions they might conceive from his inflexibility. Such a warning nevertheless is excessively dreaded from a just and dispassionate master: for besides that they are not certain of obtaining favour, and that the same person is never pardoned twice, they forfeit the right which they acquire from their long service, by having had warning given; and, when they are restored, they begin as it were a new service. This prevents the old servants from growing insolent; and makes them more circumspect, in proportion as they have more to lose.

The three maid-servants are, the chamber-maid, the governess, and the cook. The latter is a country-girl, very proper and well qualified for the place, whom Mrs Wolmar has instructed in cookery: for in this country, which is as yet in some measure in a state of simplicity, young ladies learn to do that business themselves, that when they keep house, they may be able to direct their servants; and consequently are less liable to be imposed upon by them. B—— is no longer the chamber-maid; they have sent her back to Etange, where she was born; they have again entrusted her with the care of the castle, and the superintendence of the receipts, which makes

makes her in some degree comptroller of the household. Mr Wolmar intreated his wife to make this regulation ; but it was a long time before she could resolve to part with an old servant of her mother's, though she had more than one reason to be displeased with her. But after their last conference, she gave her consent, and B—— is gone. This girl is clever and honest, but babbling and indiscreet. I suspect that she has, more than once, betrayed the secrets of her mistress ; that Mr Wolmar is sensible of it, and to prevent her being guilty of the same indiscretion with respect to a stranger, he has prudently taken this method to avail himself of her good qualities, without running any hazard from her failings. She who is taken in her room, is that Fanny, of whom you have often heard me speak with so much pleasure. Notwithstanding Julia's prediction, her favours, her father's kindness and yours, this deserving and discreet young woman has not been happy in her connection. Claude Anet, who endured adversity so bravely, could not support a more prosperous state. When he found himself at ease, he neglected his business ; and his affairs being quite embarrassed, he fled the country, leaving his wife with an infant whom she has since lost. Julia having taken her home, instructed her in the business of a chamber-maid, and I was never more agreeably surprised than to find her settled in her employment, the first day of my arrival. Mr Wolmar pays great regard to her, and they have both entrusted her with the charge of superintending their children, and of having an eye likewise over their governess,

ness, who is a simple credulous country lass, but attentive, patient, and tractable; so that, in short, they have omitted no precaution to prevent the vices of the town from creeping into a family, where the master and mistress are strangers to them, and will not suffer them under their roof.

Though there is but one table among all the servants, yet there is but little communication between the men and women; and this they consider as a point of great importance. Mr Wolmar is not of the same opinion with those masters, who are indifferent to every thing which does not immediately concern their interests, and who only desire to be well served, without troubling themselves about what their servants do besides. He thinks, on the contrary, that they who regard nothing but their own service cannot be well served. Too close a connection between the two sexes, frequently occasions mischief. The disorders of most families arise from the rendezvous which are held in the chamber-maid's apartment. If there is one whom the steward happens to be fond of, he does not fail to seduce her at the expence of his master. A good understanding among the men, or among the women, is not alone sufficiently firm to produce any material consequences. But it is always between the men and the women that those secret monopolies are established, which in the end ruin the most wealthy families. They pay a particular attention therefore to the discretion and modesty of the women, not only from principles of honesty and morality, but from well-judged motives of interest. For
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whatever some may pretend, no one who does not love his duty, can discharge it as he ought; and none ever loved their duty, who were devoid of honour.

They do not, to prevent any dangerous intimacy between the two sexes, restrain them by positive rules which they might be tempted to violate in secret; but without any seeming intention, they establish good customs; which are more powerful than authority itself. They do not forbid any intercourse between them, but it is contrived in such a manner that they have no occasion or inclination to see each other. This is effectuated by making their business, their habits, their tastes, and their pleasures, entirely different. To maintain the admirable order which they have established, they are sensible that in a well regulated family there should be as little correspondence as possible between the two sexes. They, who would accuse their master of caprice, was he to enforce such a rule by way of injunction, submit, without regret, to a manner of life which is not positively prescribed to them, but which they themselves conceive to be the best and most natural. Julia insists that it must be so in fact; she maintains, that neither love nor conjugal union is the result of a continual commerce between the sexes. In her opinion, husband and wife were designed to live together, but not to live in the same manner. They ought to act in concert, without doing the same things. The kind of life, says she, which would delight the one, would be insupportable to the other; the inclinations which nature has given them, are as different as the

occupation she has assigned them: they differ no less in their amusements than in their duties. In a word, both contribute to the common good by different ways, and the proper distribution of their several cares and employments is the strongest tie that binds their union.

For my own part, I confess that my observations are much in favour of this maxim. In fact, is it not the general practice, except among the French, and those who imitate them, for the men and women to live separately? If they see each other, it is rather by short interviews, and as it were by stealth, as the Spartans visited their wives, than by an indiscreet and constant intercourse, sufficient to confound and destroy the wisest bounds of distinction which nature has set between them. We do not, even among the savages, see men and women intermingle indiscriminately. In the evening, the family meet together; every one passes the night with his wife; they separate again in the morning, and the two sexes enjoy nothing in common, but their meals at most. This is the order, which, from its universality, appears to be most natural; and even in those countries where it is perverted, we may perceive some vestiges of it remaining. In France, where the men have submitted to live after the fashion of the women, and to be continually shut up in a room with them, you may perceive from their involuntary motions that they are under confinement. While the ladies sit quietly, or loll upon their couch, you may perceive the men get up, go, come, and sit down again, perpetually restless, as if a kind of mechanical instinct continually

nually counteracted the restraint they suffered, and prompted them, in their own despite, to that active and laborious life for which nature intended them. They are the only people in the world where the men *stand* at the theatre, as if they went into the pit to relieve themselves of the fatigue of having been sitting all day in a dining-room. In short, they are so sensible of the irksomeness of this effeminate and sedantry indolence, that in order to chequer it with some degree of activity at least, they yield their places at home to strangers, and go to other men's wives in order to alleviate their disgust!

The example of Mrs Wolmar's family contributes greatly to support the maxim she establishes. Every one, as it were, being confined to their proper sex, the women there live in a great measure apart from the men. In order to prevent any suspicious connections between them, her great secret is to keep both one and the other constantly employed; for their occupations are so different, that nothing but idleness can bring them together. In the morning each apply to their proper business, and no one is at leisure to interrupt the other. After dinner the men are employed in the garden, the yard, or in some other rural occupation: the women are busy in the nursery till the hour comes at which they take a walk with the children, and sometimes indeed with the mistress, which is very agreeable to them, as it is the only time in which they take the air. The men being sufficiently tired with their day's work,

have seldom any inclination to walk, and therefore rest themselves within doors.

Every Sunday, after evening-service, the women meet again in the nursery, with some friend or relation whom they invite in their turns by Mrs Wolmar's consent. There, they have a little collation prepared for them by Julia's direction; and she permits them to chat, sing, run, or play at some little game of skill, fit to please children, and such as they may bear a part in themselves. The entertainment is composed of syllabubs, cream, and different kinds of cakes, with such other little viands as suit the taste of women and children. Wine is almost excluded, and the men, who are rarely admitted of this little female party, never are present at this collation, which Julia seldom misses. I am the only man who has obtained this privilege. Last Sunday, with great importunity, I got leave to attend her there. She took great pains to make me consider it as a very singular favour. She told me aloud that she granted it for that once only, and that she had even refused Mr Wolmar himself. You may imagine whether this difficulty of admission does not flatter female vanity a little, and whether a footman would be a welcome visitor where his master was excluded.

I made a most delicious repast with them. Where will you find such cream-cakes as we have hear? Imagine what they must be, made in a dairy where Julia presides, and eaten in her company. Fanny presented me with some cream, some seed-cake, and other little comfits. All was gone in an instant. Julia smiled at
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my appetite. I find, said she, giving me another plate of cream, that your appetite does you credit every-where, and that you make as good a figure among a club of females, as you do among the Valaisans. But I do not, answered I, make the repast with more impunity; the one may be attended with intoxication as well as the other; and reason may be as much distracted in a nursery, as in a wine-cellar. She cast her eyes down without making any reply, blushed, and began to play with her children. This was enough to sting me with remorse. This, my Lord, was my first indiscretion, and I hope it will be the last.

There shone in this little assembly a certain air of primitive simplicity, which affected me very sensibly. I perceived the same cheerfulness in every countenance, and perhaps more openness than if there had been men in company. The familiarity which was observable between the mistress and her servants, being founded on sincere attachment and confidence, only served to establish respect and authority; and the services rendered and received, appeared like so many testimonies of reciprocal friendship. There was nothing, even to the very choice of the collation, but what contributed to make this assembly engaging. Milk and sugar are naturally adapted to the state of the fair-sex, and may be deemed the symbols of innocence and sweetness, which are their most becoming ornaments. Men, on the contrary, are fond of high flavours, and strong liquors; a kind of nourishment more suitable to the active and laborious life for which nature has designed them; and when these

different tastes come to be blended, it is an infallible sign that the distinction between the two sexes is inordinately confounded. In fact, I have observed that in France, where the women constantly intermix with the men, they have entirely lost their relish for milk meats, and the men have in some measure lost their taste for wine ; and in England, where the two sexes are better distinguished, the proper taste of each is better preserved. In general, I am of opinion, that you may very often form some judgment of people's disposition, from their choice of food. The Italians, who live a great deal on vegetables, are soft and effeminate. You Englishmen, who are great eaters of meat, have something harsh in your rigid virtue, and which favours of barbarism. The Swiss, who is naturally of a calm, gentle, and cold constitution, but hot and violent when in a passion, is fond both of one and the other, and drinks milk and wine indiscriminately. The Frenchman, who is pliant and changeable, lives upon all kinds of food, and conforms himself to every taste. Julia herself may serve as an instance ; for though she makes her meals with a keen appetite, yet she does not love meat, ragouts, or salt, and never yet tasted wine by itself. Some excellent roots, eggs, cream, and fruit, compose her ordinary diet ; and was it not for fish, of which she is likewise very fond, she would be a perfect Pythagorean.

It would signify nothing to keep the women in order, if the men were not likewise under proper regulations : and this branch of domestic oeconomy, which is not of less importance, is
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still more difficult ; for the attack is generally more lively than the defence : the guardian of human nature intended it so. In the commonwealth, citizens are kept in order by principles of morality and virtue : but how are we to keep servants and mercenaries under proper regulations, otherwise than by force and restraint ? The art of a master consists in disguising this restraint under the vail of pleasure and interest, that what they are obliged to do, may seem the result of their own inclination. Sunday being a day of idleness, and servants having a right of going where they please, when business does not require their duty at home, that one day often destroys all the good examples and lessons of the other six. The habit of frequenting public houses, the converse and maxims of their comrades, the company of loose women, soon render them unserviceable to their masters, and unprofitable to themselves ; and by teaching them a thousand vices, make them unfit for servitude, and unworthy of liberty.

To remedy this inconvenience, they endeavour to keep them at home by the same motives which induce them to go abroad. Why do they go abroad ? To drink and play at a public house. They drink and play at home. All the difference is, that the wine costs them nothing, that they do not get drunk, and that there are some winners at play without any losers. The following is the method taken for this purpose.

Behind the house is a shady walk, where they have fixed the lists. There, in the summer time, the livery servants and the men in the yard meet every Sunday after sermon-time, to play in
little

little detached parties ; not for money, for it is not allowed ; nor for wine, which is given them ; but for a prize furnished by their master's generosity : which is generally some piece of goods or apparel fit for their use. The number of games is in proportion to the value of the prize ; so that when the prize is somewhat considerable, as a pair of silver buckles, a neckcloth, a pair of silk stockings, a fine hat, or any thing of that kind, they have generally several bouts to decide it. They are not confined to one particular game, but they change them, that one man, who happens to excel in a particular game, may not carry off all the prizes, and that they may grow stronger and more dextrous by a variety of exercises. At one time, the contest is who shall first reach a mark at the other end of the walk ; at another time, it is who shall throw the same stone farthest ; then again it is who shall carry the same weight longest. Sometimes they contend for a prize by shooting at a mark. Most of these games are attended with some little preparations, which serve to prolong them, and render them entertaining. Their master and mistress often honour them with their presence ; they sometimes take their children with them ; nay, even strangers resort thither, excited by curiosity, and they desire nothing better than to bear a share in the sport ; but none are ever admitted without Mr Wolmar's approbation and the consent of the players, who would not find their account in granting it readily. This custom has imperceptibly become a kind of shew, in which the actors, being animated by the presence of the spectators, prefer the glory of applause

plause to the lucre of the reward. As these exercises make them more active and vigorous, they set a greater value on themselves, and being accustomed to estimate their importance from their own intrinsic worth, rather than from their possessions, they prize honour, notwithstanding they are footmen, beyond money.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the advantages which they derive from a practice so trifling in appearance, and which is always despised by little minds; but it is the prerogative of true genius to produce great effects by inconsiderable means. Mr Wolmar has assured me that these little institutions, which his wife first suggested, scarce stood him in fifty crowns a-year. But, said he, how often do you think I am repaid this sum in my house-keeping and my affairs in general, by the vigilance and attention with which I am served by these faithful servants, who derive all their pleasures from their master; by the interest they take in a family which they consider as their own; by the advantage I reap, in their labours, from the vigour they acquire at their exercises; by the benefit of keeping them always in health, in preserving them from those excesses which are common to men in their station, and from those disorders which frequently attend such excesses; by securing them from any propensity to knavery, which is an infallible consequence of irregularity, and by confirming them in the practice of honesty; in short, by the pleasure of having such agreeable recreations within ourselves at such a trifling expence? If there are any among them, either man or woman, who do not
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care to conform to our regulations, but prefer the liberty of going where they please on various pretences, we never refuse to give them leave; but we consider this licentious turn as a very suspicious symptom, and we are always ready to mistrust such dispositions. Thus these little amusements which furnish us with good servants, serve also as a direction to us in the choice of them.—I must confess, my Lord, that, except in this family, I never saw the same men made good domestics for personal service, good husbandmen for tilling the ground, good soldiers for the defence of their country, and honest fellows in any station into which fortune may chance to throw them.

In the winter, their pleasures vary as well as their labours. On a Sunday, all the servants in the family, and even the neighbours, men and women indiscriminately, meet after service-time in a hall where there is a good fire, some wine, fruits, cakes, and a fiddle to which they dance. Mrs Wolmar never fails to be present for some time at least, in order to preserve decorum and modesty by her presence; and it is not uncommon for her to dance herself, though among her own people. When I was first made acquainted with this custom, it appeared to me not quite conformable to the strictness of Protestant morals. I told Julia so; and she answered me to the following effect:

Pure morality is charged with so many severe duties, that if it is overburdened with forms which are in themselves indifferent, they will always be of prejudice to what is really essential. This is said to be the case with the monks
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in general, who being slaves to rules totally immaterial, are utter strangers to the meaning of honour and virtue. This defect is less observable among us, though we are not wholly exempt from it. Our churchmen, who are as much superior to other priests in knowledge, as our religion is superior to all others in purity, do nevertheless maintain some maxims, which seem to be rather founded on prejudice than reason. Of this kind, is that which condemns dancing and assemblies, as if there were more harm in dancing than singing, as if each of these amusements were not equally a propensity of nature, and as if it were a crime to divert ourselves publicly with an innocent and harmless recreation. For my own part, I think, on the contrary, that every time there is a concourse of the two sexes, every public diversion becomes innocent by being public; whereas the most laudable employment becomes suspicious in a *tete-a-tete* party *. Man and woman were formed for each other, their union by marriage is the end of nature. All false religion is at war with nature; ours which conforms to and rectifies natural propensity, proclaims a divine institution which is most suitable to mankind. Religion ought not to increase the embarrassment which civil regulations throw in the way of matrimony, by difficulties which the gospel does not create, and which are contrary to the true spirit

* In my Letter to Mr D'Alembert, concerning the theatres, I have transcribed the following passage and some others; but as I was then preparing this edition, I thought it better to delay making the acknowledgment till this publication.

spirit of Christianity. Let any one tell me where young people can have an opportunity of conceiving a mutual liking, and of seeing each other with more decorum and circumspection, than in an assembly where the eyes of the spectators being constantly upon them, oblige them to behave with peculiar caution? How can we offend God by an agreeable and wholesome exercise, suitable to the vivacity of youth; an exercise which consists in the art of presenting ourselves to each other with grace and elegance, and wherein the presence of the spectator imposes a decorum which no one dares to violate? Can we conceive a more effectual method to avoid imposition with respect to person at least, by displaying ourselves with all our natural graces and defects before those whose interest it is to know us thoroughly, ere they oblige themselves to love us? Is not the obligation of reciprocal affection greater than that of self-love? and is it not an attention worthy of a pious and virtuous pair, who propose to marry, thus to prepare their hearts for that mutual love which is prompted by heaven.

What is the consequence, in those places where people are under a continual restraint, where the most innocent gaiety is punished as criminal, where the young people of different sexes dare not meet in public, and where the indiscreet severity of the pastor preaches nothing, in the name of God, but servile constraint, sadness, and melancholy? They find means to elude an insufferable tyranny, which nature and reason disavow. When gay and sprightly youth are debarred from lawful pleasures, they substitute

tute others more dangerous in their stead. Private parties artfully concerted, supply the place of public assemblies. By being obliged to concealment as if they were criminal, they at length become so in fact. Harmless joy loves to display itself in the face of the world, but vice is a friend to darkness, and innocence and secrecy never subsist long together. My dear friend, said she, grasping my hand, as if she meant to convey her repentance, and communicate the purity of her own heart to mine; who can be more sensible of the importance of this truth than ourselves? What sorrow and troubles, what tears and remorse we might have prevented for so many years past, if we could but have foreseen how dangerous a private intercourse was to that virtue which we always loved!

Besides, said Mrs Wolmar, in a softer tone, it is not in a numerous assembly, where we are seen and heard by all the world, but in private parties, where secrecy and freedom is indulged, that our morals are in danger. It is from this principle, that whenever my domestics meet, I am glad to see them all together. I even approve of their inviting such young people in the neighbourhood whose company will not corrupt them; and I hear with pleasure, that, when they mean to commend the morals of any of our young neighbours, they say,—He is admitted at Mr Wolmar's. We have a farther view in this. Our men-servants are all very young; and among the women, the governess is yet single: it is not reasonable that the retired life they lead with us, should debar them of an op-

portunity of forming an honest connection. We endeavour therefore, in these little meetings, to give them this opportunity, under our inspection, that we may assist them in their choice; and thus by endeavouring to make happy families, we increase the felicity of our own.

I ought now to justify myself for dancing with these good people; but I rather chuse to pass sentence on myself in this respect, and frankly acknowledge, that my chief motive is the pleasure I take in the exercise. You know that I always resembled my cousin in her passion for dancing; but after the death of my mother, I bade adieu for ever to the ball and all public assemblies: I kept my resolution, even to the day of my marriage; and will keep it still, without thinking it any violation to dance now and then in my own house with my guests and my domestics. It is an exercise very good for my health, during the sedantary life which we are obliged to lead here in winter. I find it an innocent amusement; for after a good dance, my conscience does not reproach me. It amuses Mr Wolmar likewise, and all my coquetry in this particular is only to please him. I am the occasion of his coming into the ball-room; the good people are best satisfied when they are honoured with their master's presence; and they express a satisfaction when they see me amongst them. In short, I find that such occasioned familiarity forms an agreeable connection and attachment between us, which approaches nearer the natural condition of mankind, by moderating the meanness of servitude and the rigour of authority.

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Such, my Lord, are the sentiments of Julia, with respect to dancing; and I have often wondered how so much affability could consist with such a degree of subordination, and how she and her husband could so often stoop to level themselves with their servants, and yet the latter never be tempted to assume equality in their turn. I question if any Asiatic monarchs are attended in their palaces with more respect, than Mr and Mrs Wolmar are served in their own house. I never knew any commands less imperious than theirs, or more readily executed: if they ask for any thing, their servants fly; if they excuse their failings, they themselves are nevertheless sensible of their faults. I was never better convinced how much the force of what is said, depends on the mode of expression.

This has led me into a reflection on the affected gravity of masters; which is, that it is rather to be imputed to their own failings, than to the effects of their familiarity; that they are despised in their families, and that the insolence of servants is rather an indication of a vicious than of a weak master: for nothing gives them such assurance, as the knowledge of his vices; and they consider all discoveries of that kind as so many dispensations, which free them from their obedience to a man whom they can no longer respect.

Servants imitate their masters; and by copying them awkwardly, they render those defects more conspicuous in themselves, which the polish of education, in some measure, disguised in the others. At Paris, I used to judge of the

ladies of my acquaintance, by the air and manners of their waiting-women, and this rule never deceived me. Besides that the lady's woman, when she becomes the confidant of her mistress's secrets, makes her buy her discretion at a dear rate, she likewise frames her conduct according to her lady's sentiments, and discloses all her maxims by an aukward imitation. In every instance, the master's example is more efficacious than his authority; it is not natural to suppose that their servants will be honefter than themselves. It is to no purpose to make a noise, to swear, to abuse them, to turn them off, to get a new set; all this avails nothing towards making good servants. When they, who do not trouble themselves about being hated and despised by their domestics, nevertheless imagine that they are well served, the reason of their mistake is, that they are contented with what they see, and satisfied with an appearance of diligence, without observing the thousand secret prejudices they suffer continually, and of which they cannot discover the source. But where is the man so devoid of honour, as to be able to endure the contempt of every one round him? Where is the woman so abandoned, as not to be susceptible of insults? How many ladies, both at Paris and in London, who think themselves greatly respected, would burst into tears if they heard what was said of them in their anti-chambers? Happily for their peace, they comfort themselves by taking these Arguses for weak creatures, and by flattering themselves that they are blind to those practices which they do not even deign to hide from them. They like-
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wife in their turn discover, by their sullen obedience, the contempt they have for their mistresses. Masters and servants become mutually sensible, that it is not worth their while to conciliate each other's esteem.

The behaviour of servants seems to me to be the most certain and nice proof of the master's virtue; and I remember, my Lord, to have formed a good opinion of yours at Valais without knowing you, purely because, though you spoke somewhat harshly to your attendants, they were not the less attached to you, and that they expressed as much respect for you in your absence, as if you had been within hearing. It has been said, that no man is a hero in the eyes of his Valet de Chambre; perhaps not; but every worthy man will enjoy his servant's esteem; which sufficiently proves that heroism is only a vain phantom, and that nothing is solid but virtue. The power of its empire is particularly observable here in the lowest commendations of the servants; commendations the less to be suspected, as they do not consist of vain eulogiums, but of an artless expression of their feelings. As they cannot suppose, from any thing which they see, that other masters are not like theirs, they therefore do not commend them on account of those virtues which they conceive to be common to masters in general; but in the simplicity of their hearts, they thank God for having sent the rich to make those under them happy, and to be a comfort to the poor.

Servitude is a state so unnatural to mankind, that it cannot subsist without some degree of discontent. Nevertheless, they respect their ma-

fter, and say nothing. If any murmurings escape them against their mistress, they are more to her honour than encomiums would be. No one complains that she is wanting in kindness to them, but that she pays so much regard to others; no one can endure that his zeal should be put in competition with that of his comrades, and as every one imagines himself foremost in attachment, he would be first in favour. This is their only complaint, and their greatest injustice.

There is not only a proper subordination among those of inferior station, but a perfect harmony among those of equal rank; and this is not the least difficult part of domestic economy. Amidst the clashings of jealousy and self-interest, which make continual divisions in families not more numerous than this, we seldom find servants united but at the expence of their masters. If they agree, it is to rob in concert; if they are honest, every one shews his importance at the expence of the rest: they must either be enemies or accomplices, and it is very difficult to find a way of guarding at the same time both against their knavery and their dissentions. The masters of families in general know no other method but that of chusing the alternative between these two inconveniences. Some preferring interest to honour, foment a quarrelsome disposition among their servants by means of private reports, and think it a master-piece of prudence to make them superintendants and spies over each other. Others of a more indolent nature, rather chuse that their servants should rob them, and live peaceably among them-

themselves; they pique themselves upon discountenancing any information which a faithful servant may give them out of pure zeal. Both are equally to blame. The first by exciting continual disturbances in their families, which are incompatible with good order and regularity, get together a heap of knaves and informers, who are busy in betraying their fellow-servants, that they may hereafter perhaps betray their masters. The second, by refusing any information with regard to what passes in their families, countenance combinations against themselves, encourage the wicked, dishearten the good, and only maintain a pack of arrogant and idle rascals at a great expence, who, agreeing together at their master's cost, look upon their service as a matter of favour, and their thefts as perquisites *.

It is a great error in domestic as well as in civil oeconomy to oppose one vice to another, or to attempt an equilibrium between them, as if that which saps the foundation of all order, could ever tend to establish regularity. This mistaken policy only serves to unite every inconvenience. When particular vices are tolerated in a family, they do not reign alone. Let one take root, a thousand will soon spring up. They presently
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* I have narrowly examined into the management of great families, and have found it impossible for a master who has twenty servants, to know whether he has one honest man among them, and not to mistake the greatest rascal perhaps to be that one. This alone would give me an aversion to riches. The rich lose one of the sweetest pleasures of life, the pleasure of confidence and esteem. They purchase all their gold at a dear rate!

ruin the servants who harbour them, undo the master who tolerates them, and corrupt or injure the children who remark them with attention. What father can be so unworthy as to put any advantage whatever in competition with this last inconvenience? What honest man would chuse to be master of a family, if it was impossible for him to maintain peace and fidelity in his house at the same time, and if he must be obliged to purchase the attachment of his servants at the expence of their mutual good understanding?

Who does not see, that in this family, they have not even an idea of any such difficulty? so much does the union among the several members proceed from their attachment to the head. It is here we may perceive a striking instance, how impossible it is to have a sincere affection for a master without loving every thing that belongs to him; a truth which is the real foundation of Christian charity. Is it not very natural that the children of the same father should live together like brethren? This is what they tell us every day at church, without making us feel the sentiment; and this is what the domestics in this family feel, without being told it.

This disposition to good fellowship is owing to a choice of proper subjects. Mr Wolmar, when he hires his servants, does not examine only whether they suit his wife and himself, but whether they suit each other; and if they were to discover a settled antipathy between two of the best servants, it would be sufficient for them to discharge one: for, says Julia, in so small a family, a family where they never go abroad,
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but are constantly before each other, they ought to agree perfectly among themselves. They ought to consider it as their father's house, where all are of the same family. One who happens to be disagreeable to the rest, is enough to make them hate the place; and that disagreeable object being constantly before their eyes, they would neither be easy themselves, nor suffer us to be quiet.

After having made the best assortment in their power, they unite them as it were by the services which they oblige each to render the other, and they contrive that it shall be the real interest of every one to be beloved by his fellow-servants. No one is so well received who solicits a favour for himself, as when he asks it for another; so that whoever has any thing to request, endeavours to engage another to intercede for him; and this they do with greater readiness, since, whether their master grants or refuses the favour requested, he never fails to acknowledge the merit of the person who makes the intercession. On the contrary, both he and Mrs Wolmar always reject the solicitations of those who only regard themselves. Why, say they, should I grant what is desired in your favour, who have never made me any request in favour of another? Is it reasonable, that you should be more favoured than your companions, because they are more obliging than you? They do more; they engage them to serve each other in private, without any ostentation, and without assuming any merit. This is the more easily accomplished, as they know that their master, who is witness of their discretion, will esteem them

them the more: thus self-interest is a gainer, and self-love no loser. They are so convinced of this general disposition to oblige, and they have such confidence in each other, that when they have any favour to ask, they frequently mention it at table by way of conversation; very often without farther trouble, they find that the thing has been requested and granted, and as they do not know whom to thank, their obligation is to all.

It is by this, and such like methods, that they beget an attachment among them, resulting from, and subordinate to, the zeal they have for their master. Thus, far from leaguings together to his prejudice, they are only united for his service. However it may be their interest to love each other, they have still stronger motives for pleasing him; their zeal for his service gets the better of their mutual good-will, and each considering himself as injured by losses which may make their master less able to recompense a faithful servant, they are all equally incapable of suffering any individual to do him wrong unnoticed. This principle of policy, which is established in this family, seems to have somewhat sublime in it; and I cannot sufficiently admire how Mr and Mrs Wolmar have been able to transform the vile function of an informer into an office of zeal, integrity, and courage, as noble, or at least as praise-worthy, as it was among the Romans.

They began by subverting, or rather by preventing, in a plain and perspicuous manner, and by affecting instances, that servile and criminal practice, that mutual toleration at the master's cost, which a worthless servant never
fails

fails to inculcate to a good one, under the mask of a charitable maxim. They made them understand, that the precept which enjoins us to hide our neighbour's faults, relates to those only which do injury to no one; that if they are witnesses to any injustice which injures a third person, and do not discover it, they are guilty of it themselves; and that as nothing can oblige us to conceal such faults in others, but a consciousness of our own defects, therefore no one would chuse to countenance knaves, if he was not a knave himself. Upon these principles, which are just in general, as between man and man, but more strictly so with respect to the close connection between master and servant, they hold it here as an uncontested truth, that whoever sees their master wronged, without making a discovery, is more guilty than he who did the wrong: for he suffers himself to be misled by the prospect of advantage; but the other in cool blood, and without any view of interest, can be induced to secrecy by no other motive than a thorough disregard to justice, an indifference towards the welfare of the family he serves, and a hidden desire of copying the example he conceals. Therefore, even where the fault is considerable, the guilty party may nevertheless sometimes hope for pardon, but the witness who conceals the fact, is infallibly dismissed as a man of a bad disposition.

In return, they receive no accusation which may be suspected to proceed from injustice and calumny; that is to say, they admit of none in the absence of the accused. If any one comes to make a report against his fellow-servant, or
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to prefer a personal complaint against him, they ask him whether he is sufficiently informed, that is to say, whether he has entered into any previous inquiry with the person whom he is going to accuse. If he answers in the negative, they ask him how he can judge of an action, when he is not acquainted with the motives to it? The fact, say they, may depend on some circumstance to which you are a stranger; there may be some particulars which may serve to justify or excuse it, and which you know nothing of. How can you presume to condemn any one's conduct, before you know by what motives it is directed? One word of explanation would probably have rendered it justifiable in your eyes. Why then do you run the risque of condemning an action wrongfully, and of exposing me to participate of your injustice? If he assures them, that he has entered into a previous explanation with the accused: why then, say they, do you come without him, as if you was afraid that he would falsify what you are going to relate? By what right do you neglect taking the same precaution with respect to me, which you think proper to use with regard to yourself? Is it reasonable to desire me to judge of a fact from your report, of which you refuse to judge yourself by the testimony of your own eyes? and would not you be answerable for the partial judgment I might form, if I was to remain satisfied with your bare deposition? In the end, they direct them to summon the party accused; if they consent, the matter is soon decided; if they refuse, they dismiss them with a severe reprimand, but they keep the secret, and watch

watch them both so narrowly, that they are not long at a loss to know which of the two was in the wrong.

This rule is so well known and so well established, that you never hear a servant in this family speak ill of his absent comrade; for they are all sensible that it is the way to pass for a liar and a coward. When any one of them accuses another, it is openly, frankly, and not only to his face, but in the presence of all his fellow-servants, that they who are witnesses to their accusation, may be vouchers of their integrity. In case of any personal disputes among them, the difference is generally made up by mediators without troubling Mr and Mrs Wolmar: but when the interest of the master is at stake, the matter cannot remain a secret; the guilty party must either accuse himself, or be accused. These little pleadings happen very seldom; and never but at table, in the rounds which Julia makes every day while her people are at dinner or supper, which Mr Wolmar pleasantly calls her general sessions. After having patiently attended to the accusation and the defence, if the affairs regard her interest, she thanks the accuser for his zeal. I am sensible, says she, that you have a regard for your fellow-servant, you have always spoken well of him, and I commend you, because the love of your duty and of justice has prevailed over your private affections; it is thus that a faithful servant and an honest man ought to behave. If the party accused is not in fault, she always subjoins some compliment to her justification of his innocence. But if he is really guilty, she in some

measure spares his shame before the rest. She supposes that he has something to communicate in his defence, which he does not chuse to declare in public; she appoints an hour to hear him in private, and it is then that she or her husband talk to him as they think proper. What is very remarkable is, that the most severe of the two is not most dreaded, and that they are less afraid of Mr Wolmar's solemn reprimand, than of Julia's affecting reproaches. The former speaking the language of truth and justice, humbles and confounds the guilty; the latter strikes them with the most cruel remorse, by convincing them with what regret she is forced to withdraw her kindness from them. She sometimes extorts tears of grief and shame from them; and it is not uncommon for her to be moved herself when she sees them repent, in hopes that she may not be obliged to abide by her word.

They who judge of these concerns by what passes in their own families, or among their neighbours, would probably deem them frivolous or tiresome. But you, my Lord, who have such high notions of the duties and enjoyments of a master of a family, and who are sensible what an ascendancy natural disposition and virtue have over the human heart, you perceive the importance of these minutiae, and know on what circumstances their success depends. Riches do not make a man rich, as is well observed in some romance. The wealth of a man is not in his coffers, but in the use he makes of what he draws out of them; for our possessions do not become our own, but by the
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uses to which we allot them, and abuses are always more inexhaustible than riches; whence it happens that our enjoyments are not in proportion to our expences, but depend on the just regulation of them. An idiot may toss ingots of gold into the sea, and say he has enjoyed them: but what comparison is there between such an extravagant enjoyment, and that which a wise man would have derived from the least part of their value? Order and regularity, which multiply and perpetuate the use of riches, are alone capable of converting the enjoyment of them into felicity. But if real property arises from the relation which our possessions bear to us, if it is rather the use than the acquisition of riches which confers it, what can be more proper subjects of attention for a master of a family than domestic oeconomy, and the good government of his household, in which the most perfect correspondences more immediately concern him, and where the happiness of every individual is an addition to his own as the head?

Are the most wealthy the most happy? No. How then does wealth contribute to felicity? But every well-regulated family is emblematic of the master's mind. Gilded ceilings, luxury, and magnificence, only serve to shew the vanity of those who display such parade; whereas, whenever you see order without melancholy, peace without slavery, plenty without profusion, you may say with confidence, The master of this house is a happy being.

For my own part, I think the most certain sign of true content is a domestic and retired life, and that they who are continually resorting

to others in quest of happiness, do not enjoy it at home. A father of a family who amuses himself at home, is rewarded for his continual attention to domestic concerns, by the constant enjoyment of the most agreeable sensations of nature. He is the only one who can be properly said to be master of his own happiness, because, like heaven itself, he is happy in desiring nothing more that he enjoys. Like the Supreme Being, he does not wish to enlarge his possessions, but to make them really his own, under proper directions, and by using them conformably to the just relations of things: if he does not enrich himself by new acquisitions, he enriches himself by the true enjoyment of what he possesses. He once only enjoyed the income of his lands; he now enjoys the lands themselves, by overlooking their culture, and surveying them from time to time. His servant was a stranger to him: he is now part of his enjoyment; his child; he makes him his own. Formerly he had only power over his servant's actions; now he has authority over his inclinations. He was his master only by paying him wages; now he rules by the sacred dominion of benevolence and esteem. Though fortune spoils him of his wealth, she can never rob him of those affections which are attached to him; she cannot deprive a father of his children; all the difference is, that he maintained them yesterday, and that they will support him to-morrow. It is thus that we may learn the true enjoyment of our riches, of our family, and of ourselves; it is thus that the minutiae of a family become agreeable to a worthy man who knows their value;

lue; it is thus that, far from regarding these little duties as troublesome, he makes them a part of his happiness, and derives the glory and pleasure of human nature from these noble and affecting offices.

If these precious advantages are despised or little known, and if the few who endeavour to acquire them seldom obtain them, the reason, in both cases, is the same. There are many simple and sublime duties, which few people can relish and fulfil. Such are those of the master of a family, for which the air and bustle of the world give him a disgust, and which he never discharges properly when he is only inflamed by motives of avarice and interest. Some think themselves excellent masters, and are only careful oeconomists; their income may thrive, and their family nevertheless be in a bad condition. They ought to have more enlarged views to direct an administration of such importance, so as to give it a happy issue. The first thing to be attended to in the due regulation of a family, is to admit none but honest people, who will not have any secret intention to disturb that regularity. But are honesty and servitude so compatible, that we may hope to find servants who are honest men? No, my Lord, if we would have them, we must not inquire for them, but we must make them; and none who are not men of integrity themselves, are capable of making others honest. It is to no purpose for a hypocrite to affect an air of virtue, he will never inspire any one with an affection for it; and if he knew how to make virtue amiable, he would be in love with it himself. What do formal

lessons avail, when daily example contradicts them, unless to make us suspect that the moralist means to sport with our credulity? What an absurdity are they guilty of who exhort us to do as they say, and not as they act themselves! He who does not act up to what he says, never speaks to any effect; for the language of the heart is wanting, which alone is persuasive and affecting. I have sometimes heard conversations of this kind held in a gross manner before servants, in order to read them lectures, as they do to children sometimes, in an indirect way. Far from having any reason to imagine that they were the dupes of such artifice, I have always observed them smile in secret at the folly of their master, who must have taken them for blockheads, by making an awkward display of sentiments before them, which they knew were none of his own.

All these idle subtleties are unknown in this family, and the grand art by which the master and mistress make their servants what they would desire them to be, is to appear themselves before them what they really are. Their behaviour is always frank and open, because they are not in any fear lest their actions should belie their professions. As they themselves do not entertain principles of morality different from those which they inculcate to others, they have no occasion for any extraordinary circumspection in their discourse; a word blundered out unseasonably, does not overthrow the principles they have laboured to establish. They do not indiscreetly tell all their affairs, but they openly proclaim all their maxims. Whether at table, or abroad,
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in private, or in public, their sentiments are still the same: they ingenuously deliver their opinions on every subject; and without their having any individual in view, every one is instructed by their conversation. As their servants never see them do any thing but what is just, reasonable and equitable, they do not consider justice as a tax on the poor, as a yoke on the unhappy, and as one of the evils of their condition. The care they take never to let the labourers come in vain, and lose their day's work in seeking after their wages, teaches their servants to set a just value on time. When they see their master so careful of other mens time, each concludes that his own time must be of consequence, and therefore deems idleness the greatest crime he can be guilty of. The confidence which their servants have in their integrity, gives that force to their regulations which makes them observed, and prevents abuses. They are not afraid, when they come to receive their weekly gratuities, that their mistress should partially determine the youngest and most active to have been the most diligent. An old servant is not apprehensive lest they should start some quibble, to save the promised augmentation to their wages. They can never hope to take advantage of any division between their master and mistress, in order to make themselves of consequence, and to obtain from one what the other has refused. They who are unmarried, are not afraid lest they should oppose their settlement, in order to detain them longer, and by that means make their service a prejudice to them. If a strange servant was to tell the domestics of this family, that master and
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servants are in a state of war with each other ; that when the latter do the former all the injury they can, they only make lawful reprisals ; that masters being usurpers, liars, and knaves, there can consequently be no harm in using them as they use their prince, the people, or individuals, and in returning those injuries with dexterity which they offer openly ;—one who should talk in this manner would not be attended to ; they would not give themselves the trouble to controvert or obviate such sentiments ; they who give rise to them, are the only persons whose business it is to refute them.

You never perceive any sullenness or discontent in the discharge of their duty, because there is never any haughtiness or capriciousness in the orders they receive ; nothing is required of them but what is reasonable and expedient ; and their master and mistress have too much respect for the dignity of human nature, even in a state of servitude, to put them upon any employment which may debase them. Moreover, nothing here is reckoned mean but vice ; and whatever is reasonable and necessary, is deemed honourable and becoming.

They do not allow of any intrigues abroad, neither has any one any inclinations of that kind. They are sensible that their fortune is most firmly attached to that of their master, and that they shall never want any thing while his family prospers. Therefore in serving him, they take care of their own patrimony, and increase it by making their service agreeable ; this above all things is their interest. But this word is somewhat misapplied here ; for I never knew a-
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ny system of policy by which self-interest was so skilfully directed, and where at the same time it had less influence than in this family. They all act from a principle of attachment; and one would think that venal souls were purified as soon as they entered into this dwelling of wisdom and union. One would imagine that part of the master's intelligence, and of the mistress's sensibility, was conveyed to each of their servants; they seem so judicious, benevolent, honest, and so much above their station. Their greatest ambition is to do well, to be valued and esteemed; and they consider an obliging expression from their master or mistress, in the light of a gift.

These, my Lord, are the most material observations I have made on that part of the œconomy of this family, which regards the servants and labourers. As to Mr and Mrs Wolmar's manner of living, and the education of their children, each of these articles very well deserves a separate letter. You know with what view I began these remarks; but in truth the whole forms such an agreeable representation, that we need only meditate upon it to advance it, and we require no other inducement than the pleasure it affords us.



